

31 July 2023

Andrea Vance  
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Ref: OIA-13018

Dear Andrea

**Request made under the Official Information Act 1982**

Thank you for your emails of 1 July 2023 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

- 1. A copy of any correspondence, including letters, emails and text or other messages sent to any individual that references the behaviour or conduct of Minister Kiritapu Allan, or concerns about workplace relations or culture either within her office, NZTA, or any public service agencies or other entities.*
- 2. A copy of any meeting minutes, or recollections of meetings, where the above may have been discussed.*
- 3. Have any NZTA staff ever expressed or heard concerns, formally or informally, that references the behaviour or conduct of Minister Kiritapu Allan, or concerns about workplace relations or culture either within her office or any public service agencies or other entities.*
- 4. For any incidents or concerns that are detailed in any of the material above, a brief outline of the incident, the dates in which it concerned, the location, and the nature of the role or the title of any individuals involved.*
- 5. In your response to this request, please provide a list of all entities that have been consulted in the provision of this response, including whether any Minister or any individual within the Minister's Office has been informed both formally or informally of the contents of this request. That includes any emails, text messages or phone calls that may be made at any stage of preparing the response to this request.*

6. *A description of any matters that may have been raised regarding Minister Kiritapu Allan becoming involved in Waka Kotahi's day-to-day operations, including but not restricted to the contracting of services/operators.*
7. *A copy of any text messages, recollections of any phone calls, emails, or any other documentation which refers to the above.*
8. *A copy of any meeting minutes, or recollections of meetings, where the above may have occurred.*
9. *In your response to this request, please provide a list of all entities that have been consulted in the provision of this response, including whether any Minister or any individual within the Minister's Office has been informed both formally or informally of the contents of this request. That includes any emails, text messages or phone calls that may be made at any stage of preparing the response to this request.*

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency interacts with the Associate Minister of Transport's office via the Transport Private Secretary. We hold three text messages that mention workplace relations / culture within the former Minister Allan's office.

Also, Waka Kotahi is aware of three separate occasions when Ms Allan had robust discussions with Waka Kotahi staff regarding the initial Waka Kotahi response post Cyclone Gabrielle and the planned approach for longer-term recovery work. Waka Kotahi holds two emails and a text message that fall within scope of this request.

The text messages and emails are withheld under the following sections of the Act:

- 9(2)(g)(i) – to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between public sector officials in the course of their duty
- 9(2)(g)(ii) – to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through protection of Waka Kotahi staff from improper pressure or harassment.

Exact descriptions / recollections of the above-outlined instances have also been withheld under sections 9(2)(g)(i) and 9(2)(g)(ii) of the Act.

Waka Kotahi has verbally advised the office of the Minister of Transport about this request and shared a copy of the final response with the office as part of our 'no surprises' policy.

Waka Kotahi verbally advised the Public Service Commission and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) of this request and shared a copy of the response with DPMC. We have also consulted the Ministry of Transport.

With respect to the information that has been withheld, I do not consider there are any other factors which would render it desirable, in the public interest, to make the information available.

Under section 28 of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision to withhold some of the information requested. The contact details for the Ombudsman can be located at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz).

If you would like to discuss this reply with Waka Kotahi, please contact Andy Knackstedt  
Senior Manager Media, by email to [andrew.knackstedt@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:andrew.knackstedt@nzta.govt.nz) or by phone (04) 894 6285.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leisa Coley', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

**Leisa Coley**  
National Manager Government Relations