



25 October 2024

OIAD-1223

9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your emails of 21 August and 2 September 2024 requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

1. *All Ministry for the Environment advice relating to the 'Independent panel to review methane science and targets'. This includes reports, draft reports, briefings, notes, emails and other records.*
2. *The names and affiliations of all authors and/or draft contributors to the 'Independent panel to review methane science and targets' terms of reference.*
3. *Copies of the full conflict of interest submissions made by Nicola Shadbolt, Dave Frame, Bill Collins, Sara Mikaloff-Fletcher and Laura Revell, to the chair and Secretariat of the 'Independent panel to review methane science and targets', including all perceived or real conflicts of interest.*
4. *A copy of the full conflict-of-interest register maintained by the Secretariat of the 'Independent panel to review methane science and targets'.*
5. *A copy of all conflict of interest management plans put in place by the Chair and Secretariat of the 'Independent panel to review methane science and targets'.*

The Ministry for the Environment has identified 33 documents in scope of the first, third, and fourth points of your request, as listed in the document schedule below. These are comprised of 12 draft and final briefings, 15 emails (some including attachments), five conflict of interest forms, and a conflict-of-interest register.

I am refusing the 12 briefings under section 18(d) of the Act as they are already publicly available at <https://environment.govt.nz/oia-releases/request-for-advice-to-minister-watts-on-the-methane-review-panel/>. However, draft Cabinet papers and Terms of Reference appended to these briefings are not already publicly available, so I have released these to you as a single PDF document, with some information withheld under the following sections of the Act:

- 9(2)(a) to protect the privacy of natural persons.
- 9(2)(g)(i) to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions between Ministers of the Crown and employees of any public service agency or organisation in the course of their duty.

I am releasing the remaining 21 documents to you in part as two PDF documents, with some information withheld under the following sections of the Act:

- 9(2)(a) to protect the privacy of natural persons.
- 9(2)(g)(i) to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions between Ministers of the Crown and employees of any public service agency or organisation in the course of their duty.

I have further redacted some information in the documents released where it is out of scope of your request.

With respect to your second point, I have interpreted “authors and contributors” as any individual who was a substantive contributor to drafting the Terms of Reference document, excluding proofreaders and others whose contributions did not engage with the substantive nature of the document. I have provided below a list of Ministry staff members and individuals in Minister Watts’ office who were substantive contributors to the Terms of Reference. The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) will provide a separate list for its own staff and Minister McClay’s office to fulfil your request to MPI (OIA24-0619).

I am refusing your fifth point under section 18(e) of the Act as the information requested does not exist. The Ministry and the panel do not hold conflict of interest management plans for the panel members as they were not deemed necessary. An agreed approach to managing the Chair’s conflicts was included in the Chair’s signed conflict of interest form that has been released to you.

You may also be interested in the final Cabinet papers and minutes for this work programme. These were recently released on the Ministry’s website, with some information withheld under section 9 of the Act: <https://environment.govt.nz/what-government-is-doing/cabinet-papers-and-regulatory-impact-statements/methane-science-and-targets-review>.

In terms of section 9(1) of the Act, I am satisfied that, in the circumstances, the withholding of this information is not outweighed by other considerations that render it desirable to make the information available in the public interest.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of my decision to withhold information relating to this request, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on its website at: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Please note that due to the public interest in our work the Ministry for the Environment publishes responses to requests for official information on our [OIA responses page](#) shortly after the response has been sent. If you have any queries about this, please feel free to contact our Ministerial Services team: ministerials@mfe.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely



Cheryl Moir, Manager – Market Development
Ministry for the Environment | Manatū Mō Te Taiao

Document schedule

Date	Code	Title	Decision	Grounds
Various	N/A	Package of 15 emails and attachments	Released in part	9(2)(a) 9(2)(g)(i)
01/03/2024	BRF-4278	Methane Science and Targets Review	Refused in full	18(d)
15/03/2024	B24-0230/ BRF-4449	Cover brief & Cabinet paper – Announcing the Methane Science and Target Review	Refused in full	18(d)
		Appendix One: Draft Cabinet paper – Announcing the Methane Science and Target Review	Released in full	
21/03/2024	BRF-4449/ Sub24-0037	Approval to lodge: Announcing the methane science and target review	Refused in full	18(d)
		Appendix One: Cabinet paper to lodge – Announcing the methane science and targets	Released in full	
10/04/2024	B24-0276/ BRF-4562	Progressing the Methane Science and Target Review	Refused in full	18(d)
		Appendix One: Draft Terms of Reference	Released in full	
09/05/2024	B24-0304/ BRF-4669/	For Ministerial Consultation – Initiating the Methane Science and Targets Review	Refused in full	18(d)
		Sub24-0051 - Cabinet paper – Initiating the Methane Science and Targets Review and Appendices	Released in full	
27/05/2024	BRF-4767	Shortlisting of candidates for the Methane Science and Target Review Panel	Refused in full	18(d)
23/05/2024	Sub24-0051/ BRF-4812	Approval to lodge: Initiating the methane science and target review	Refused in full	18(d)
		Cabinet paper to lodge – Initiating the methane science and targets review	Released in full	
31/05/2024	B24-0365/ BRF-4761	For Ministerial Consultation – Methane Science and Targets Review: Appointment	Refused in full	18(d)
		Sub24-0067 – Draft Cabinet paper – Methane Science and Target Review Panel: Appointment	Released in part	9(2)(a) 9(2)(g)(i)

13/06/2024	B24-0406/ BRF-4905	Finalising the Terms of Reference for the Methane Science and Target Review (v1)	Refused in full	18(d)
19/06/2024	B24-0406/ BRF-4905	Finalising the Terms of Reference for the Methane Science and Target Review (v2)	Refused in full	18(d)
		Appendix One: DRAFT Terms of Reference – Methane Science and Target Review	Released in full	
24/06/2024	BRF-4951	For Approval: Methane Science and Target Review Appointment Letters	Refused in full	18(d)
24/06/2024	BRF-4947	For approval: Methane Science and Target Review Terms of Reference	Refused in full	18(d)
19/07/2024	N/A	Conflict of Interest Declaration: Nicola Shadbolt (includes management plan)	Released in part	9(2)(a)
19/07/2024	N/A	Conflict of Interest Declaration: David Frame	Released in part	9(2)(a)
19/07/2024	N/A	Conflict of Interest Declaration: Sara Mikaloff-Fletcher	Released in part	9(2)(a)
19/07/2024	N/A	Conflict of Interest Declaration: Laura Revell	Released in part	9(2)(a)
19/07/2024	N/A	Conflict of Interest Declaration: Bill Collins	Released in part	9(2)(a)
19/07/2024	N/A	Conflict of Interest Register	Released in full	

List of individuals who were substantive contributors to the Terms of Reference

Name	Title	Affiliation
Tom Womack	Senior Analyst	Ministry for the Environment
Matthew Everett	Principal Advisor	Ministry for the Environment
Emma Tauti	Policy Analyst	Ministry for the Environment
Juliet Nelson	Analyst	Ministry for the Environment
Jessica Bensemam	Principal Policy Analyst	Ministry for the Environment
Sarah Croxford	Acting Manager	Ministry for the Environment
Meredith Davis	Manager	Ministry for the Environment

Hemi Smiler	General Manager	Ministry for the Environment
Sam Buckle	Deputy Secretary	Ministry for the Environment
Matthew Maguire	Senior Solicitor	Ministry for the Environment
Jack Boltar	Ministerial Advisor	Office of the Minister of Climate Change