ELECTORAL COMMISSION
TE KAITIAKI TAKE KŌWHIRI

10 April 2026

[redacted]
By email to: [redacted]

Kia ora [redacted]

OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST 2026/25

On 29 March 2026 you made a request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA) for the following information:

- *Any assessment, review, or correspondence by the Electoral Commission regarding the $119,000 loan from Dorothy Jones (partner of the Hon Shane Jones MP) to the New Zealand First Party, as disclosed in the party's 2024 annual return.*

- *Any determination or guidance by the Commission on whether this loan constitutes a donation under the Electoral Act 1993, including consideration of the loan terms (interest rate, repayment schedule, security) and whether the terms are at market rates.*

- *Any correspondence between the Electoral Commission and New Zealand First regarding the classification or disclosure of this loan.*

- *Any general guidance or policy documents the Commission has issued regarding the treatment of loans from party members, candidates, or their family members under the Electoral Act.*

If no assessment has been conducted, I would appreciate confirmation of that fact and advice on whether the Commission intends to review the matter. I would prefer to receive this information electronically at the email address below.

The response to your request is set out below.

1) *Any assessment, review, or correspondence by the Electoral Commission regarding the $119,000 loan from Dorothy Jones (partner of the Hon Shane Jones MP) to the New Zealand First Party, as disclosed in the party's 2024 annual return.*

The party loan from Dorothy Jones to New Zealand First was entered into on 20 December 2023 for $180,000, at an interest rate of 6% per annum if demanded, with a minimum payment of $2,000 per month, to be repaid by 20 December 2025. It was first declared on 22 December 2023 as it exceeded $30,000, meaning it had to be reported within 10 working days in accordance with section 214F of the Electoral Act. That return is publicly available here: Over-30000-loan-form-NZF-Jones-1.pdf

The email correspondence regarding the reporting and publication of the loan over $30,000 is attached.

The NZ First annual return of donations and loans for the year ending 31 December 2023 shows the loan from Dorothy Jones of $180,000. The terms of the loan are recorded in the return as: "The Borrower will make a minimum repayment of $4000.00 per month. The Borrower may make lump sum payments or pay the outstanding balance then owing under this Agreement to the Lender without further bonus or penalty. 6% interest payable on the principal if demanded."

The NZ First annual return of donations and loans for the year ending 31 December 2024 then shows this same loan at a balance of $119,000. Its terms are that "the Borrower may make repayments of $4000 per month. The borrower may make lump sum payments or pay the outstanding balance then owing under this agreement to the lender without further bonus or penalty. 6% interest payable on principal if demanded."

The only correspondence on the matter is an email, released to you in full, showing correspondence with the party secretary confirming that they are correct to disclose the outstanding balance of the 2023 loan in their return for the 2024 year.

Some information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act to protect the privacy of natural persons. In each case where redactions have been made under section 9, consideration has been given to, and I am satisfied that the reasons for withholding of the information are not outweighed by other considerations which render it desirable in the public interest to make that information available.

2) *Any determination or guidance by the Commission on whether this loan constitutes a donation under the Electoral Act 1993, including consideration of the loan terms (interest rate, repayment schedule, security) and whether the terms are at market rates.*

This aspect of your request is refused under s 18(e) of the OIA as the information does not exist. The Commission has not determined or provided specific guidance on whether the treatment of this loan constitutes a donation.

3) *Any correspondence between the Electoral Commission and New Zealand First regarding the classification or disclosure of this loan.*

As for (1) above. No further correspondence has been had on this loan beyond the attached email correspondence and the party sending in the returns which are now publicly available.

4) *Any general guidance or policy documents the Commission has issued regarding the treatment of loans from party members, candidates, or their family members under the Electoral Act.*

The general guidance that we provide to parties on donations and loans is attached to this letter and included on the return forms available on the website. There is also information available on the website here and in the candidate hub.

The Commission has not issued any specific guidance regarding loans from party members, candidates or their family members as the rules apply regardless of who the donation or loan is from and the legislation does not contain any special rules on loans from party members, candidates or their family members. Accordingly, this aspect of your request is refused under s 18(e) of the OIA as the information does not exist.

5) *If no assessment has been conducted, I would appreciate confirmation of that fact and advice on whether the Commission intends to review the matter. I would prefer to receive this information electronically at the email address below.*

See the response above. The Electoral Commission will be checking the annual return for 2025, which is due on 30 April 2026, and other disclosures as we do for all parties.

In the interests of transparency, we release responses to Official Information Act requests every 3 months. We will publish this response with your personal details redacted.

You have the right under section 28(3) of the Act to make a complaint to the Ombudsman if you are not satisfied with the response to your request. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

K Temel

Kristina Temel
Chief Legal Advisor