



Prime Minister

Minister for Arts, Culture & Heritage

Minister for Child Poverty Reduction

Minister for National Security & Intelligence

02 SEP 2020

Alan Thompson
fyi-request-13380-eb3faa40@requests.fyi.org.nz

Ref: PMO 2020-155

Dear Mr Thompson

Official Information Act request relating to a formal inquiry into Whakaari/White Island referenced CAB-19-MIN-0692

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request, transferred from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to the Prime Minister's office on 17 August 2020. You requested:

"Thank you for the response to my OIA Request but you have not addressed the information that I requested. You advised that "No decision on the proposal had been made" and therefore the information I requested did not exist. I did not ask for information relating to whether a decision had been made, I requested the documentation that related to the decision for Cabinet to consider in relation to a formal inquiry as referred to in Cabinet Minute Item 5. This is likely to have included some discussion and a recommendation to Cabinet. I believe that you have two options then: 1. To provide the documentation as presented back to Cabinet in the New Year relating to a decision re a formal inquiry (whether or not they made any decision); or 2. To advise that no information or recommendation was presented to Cabinet as per Item 5 and therefore the documentation does not exist (for that reason). Can you please review your response and advise in accordance with either 1. or 2. as above."

Cabinet at its meeting on 16 December 2019 considered an oral update on the progress of the recovery and response to the Whakaari/White Island eruption, it did not consider papers, and was not asked to make a decision on whether or not to hold an inquiry. The Prime Minister/ the Prime Minister's Office received advice relating to a formal inquiry, however, this advice did not relate to any decisions made by Cabinet and so is deemed out of scope.

I have identified some information that is held by this office that is within the scope of the request. A briefing was referred to the Prime Minister's Office which related to the work underway by agencies in response to the Whakaari/White Island eruption as part of an update to Cabinet on 28 January 2020. I have transferred the decision making on this document to the Chief Executive of the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment.

Additionally, I note that there are currently two investigations underway into the Whakaari/White Island eruption. WorkSafe has opened a health and safety investigation and the Police are investigating the deaths on behalf of the coroner.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Raj Nahna', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Raj Nahna
Chief of Staff