

8 May, 2023

Kia ora,

**Request made to Radio New Zealand for information about Minister Kiri Allan's address at Māni Dunlop's farewell event**

We write further to your request for information under the Official Information Act 2005 (**OIA**) for the speech given by Minister Kiritapu Allan at the farewell for Māni Dunlop on her departure from Radio New Zealand (**RNZ**).

In short, RNZ has decided to withhold the information requested in part, under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA, in order to:

- a. protect the privacy of individuals; and
- b. protect the privacy of Minister Allan; and
- c. protect the tikanga of RNZ and its kaimahi.

**Background**

As you are aware, on 31 March 2023, RNZ hosted a farewell event for Māni Dunlop, with staff and members of Ms. Dunlop's whānau present. Ms Dunlop's partner, the Hon Kiritapu Allan, Minister of Justice, made a speech at that event.

The farewell was conducted in accordance with both tikanga Māori protocols and the protocols of how RNZ conducts employees' farewells. In relation to the event, those protocols meant that there was an open floor where people could trust that what they said was for that audience only and they were able to speak openly and frankly.

Minister Allan's kōrero was made as a direct response to the invitation, established at the start of the evening, for attendees to challenge RNZ if they wished to do so. . She made it clear she was speaking as an individual on behalf of Māni Dunlop and her whānau. In her response Ms Allan made some brief comments critical of RNZ (the **RNZ comments**) that were subsequently reported by both RNZ ("*Allan took aim at RNZ's treatment of Māori reporters and urged the public broadcaster to have a look at its culture*") and NZ Herald ("*she made comments critical of RNZ*"). Minister Allan has since publicly apologised.

**Information withheld under section 9(2)(a)**

We have considered the OIA context in relation to Ms Allan's speech, and have come to the decision to withhold the speech in part under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA. We are of the view that Ms Allan's speech, made at a private farewell with family and friends present, where speakers were encouraged to speak openly, involves a privacy interest that should be protected under section 9(2)(a) OIA, taking into account:

- a. the context in which the information was imparted, being a private farewell where kaimahi and whānau were invited to speak openly and honestly;

- b. the sensitivity of the information, being personal information of an emotional and private nature; and
- c. the circumstances in which the information was obtained, in particular the strong expectation of privacy in the context of a farewell done in accordance with RNZ tikanga.

Specifically, we consider that attendees have privacy interests that warrant protection.

We do not consider that the withholding of the information is outweighed by other considerations which would render it desirable in the public interest to make that information available.

### **Information provided**

However, there are two comments in Minister Allan's speech which are the basis for the media reports. We acknowledge that additional considerations apply to these comments. There is a public interest in the comments made by the Minister about RNZ, a public institution, and which do not affect the privacy of any other person. We also note that a degree of disclosure has already been made to the public, and the Minister and Prime Minister have commented on the event.<sup>1</sup>

RNZ has decided to provide you with a transcript of the two relevant RNZ comments, attached as **Appendix 1**. The remainder of the speech, and the video and audio recording of the RNZ comments, will be withheld to protect the attendees' privacy.

You have a right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi

### **George Bignell | Legal Adviser and Procurement Manager**

RNZ, PO Box 123, Wellington, New Zealand, 6140

DDI +64 4 474 1424

Mobile: +64 27 491 2246

[www.rnz.co.nz](http://www.rnz.co.nz)



---

<sup>1</sup> [Cabinet Minister Kiri Allan apologises over comments at RNZ farewell for fiancée Māni Dunlop | RNZ News](#); see also [Cabinet Minister Kiri Allan apologises for remarks at Māni Dunlop's farewell from RNZ - NZ Herald](#) and [Andrew Little weighs in on Kiri Allan's RNZ farewell speech for host partner Māni Dunlop - NZ Herald](#).

## Appendix 1 – Minister's comments

...

There is something within this organisation that has to be looked at. Now I know that you said that you would pick up that, the wero, that Māni left. It is not for just you, it is for your SLT to pick up. It's for your SLT to pick up. It's for your boards to pick up. That there is something within the organisation that will not, and has not been able to keep Māori talent and that is a question that I think deserves some deep reflection....

We are looking at these two, and we are looking at this organisation and how it treats its talent. Want to know... she doesn't need to do it, it's not her role to carry that anymore. So it's to this room, and the people within this place to grow and nurture, show that they have a viable future within this organisation. That you can come in as an intern and that you can get to the top spot, not just because you are Māori but because you have trained them well, you have nurtured them well.