



06 DEC 2017



Dear 

Thank you for your email of 10 October 2017 in which you request the following:

'... copies of any correspondence (including letters, memos, emails, facsimiles and notes of phone conversations), reports and minutes of meetings regarding the location and physical address of land acquired (or to be acquired) for the proposed new school in the Orewa/Silverdale/Wainui district'.

Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

As you will be aware, Orewa and its surrounding districts comprise an area facing significant population growth. As a result, the previous Government set aside \$25 million for a new 420-student primary school in the region, with a scheduled January 2021 opening date.

Following an initial Ministry assessment of 14 sites of interest, five were found to be suitable for further evaluation. From this, a preferred site was identified, and negotiations for its acquisition began. This process is progressing, along with all other necessary steps, in order to ensure that the new school's January 2021 opening date will be met. Given the complexities of the sale process, we are unable to state when the purchase process is likely to be completed.

We have identified three documents in scope of your request. These are listed in the following table (please note that our search did not uncover any relevant facsimiles, notes of phone conversations, nor minutes of meetings):

Document Number	Type of Document	Nature of Document
1	Memorandum	Ministry internal seeking approval to proceed with Acquisition Negotiations, dated 31 July 2017.
2	Letter	Ministry's property consultants to the Ministry's registered valuer seeking a valuation report, dated 30 August 2017.
3	Report	Market Valuation, dated 5 October 2017.

We have also identified 14 emails covering the period 23 August to 9 October 2017 involving the property developer/surveyor, the Ministry, the Property Group Limited (the Ministry's property consultants), and Roberts McKeown Limited (the Ministry's registered valuer).

Given the ongoing nature of the purchase negotiations, we consider that our position could be disadvantaged should the details of our preferred site become public knowledge. We therefore consider that no information relating to the preferred site should be released into

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the public domain at this time. It is clearly in the public interest that the Crown achieves the best possible outcome in property negotiations, and it is highly likely that such an outcome would be jeopardised should the requested information be released before negotiations have concluded.

We understand that there is general public interest in the Ministry's accountability and transparency, as well as a particular public interest in local residents being in a position to challenge decisions which could affect them. We consider that these public interest considerations do not outweigh the Ministry's interest in being able to negotiate land purchases in a fiscally sound manner.

We are therefore withholding all three documents and 14 emails in scope of your request under section 9(2)(j) of the Act, in order to enable the Ministry to carry out commercial negotiations without prejudice or disadvantage.

If you have any questions about this response, please feel free to contact our Media Team at media@education.govt.nz.

Thank you again for your email. You have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review this decision. You can do this by writing to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Yours sincerely



Rob Giller
Acting Head of Education Infrastructure Service