

18 August 2026

Ref: OIA26-TW17

s9(2)(a)

Via email s9(2)(a)

Dear s9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 28 July 2026 requesting information as follows:

"Dr Stuart Donovan of Motu Research is a member of the Panel appointed to hear submissions on Proposed Plan Change 120.

Te Waihanga (Infrastructure NZ) is a submitter on the Plan Change.

Dr Donovan has disclosed in his Register of Interests regarding the Panel that he has a relationship with Te Waihanga.

Would you please:

- 1. Advise me of the nature of that relationship.*
- 2. Advise me when it began, if it is ongoing, and if it has concluded, the date that it concluded.*
- 3. Provide me copies of any communications between Dr Donovan and the Commission, including any advice or other written material from Dr Donovan to the Commission.*
- 4. Advise me whether the Commission has received has any relationship with, or has received any advice from Motu Research.*

This request is made under the Official Information Act."

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). Please find my decision on your request set out below.

Interpretation

My interpretation of the various parts of your request as outlined below are based on your framing of the request which is in respect of the *Register of Interests* for the Dr Stuart Donovan as a member of the Panel appointed to hear submissions on Proposed Plan Change 120 (PC120).

- Register of interest of relationship refers to the "Register of Relationships with PC120 Submitters" and "#Submitter # and Name - 5205 New Zealand Infrastructure Commission" that is publicly available on the Auckland Council website ([PC120 Register of Interests & Register of Relationships - Stuart Donovan](#)).
- The request as a whole, including relationships and any communications/written material is in respect of PC120.
- Motu Research refers to Motu: Economic and Public Policy Research Trust (Motu).

- The time period is taken to be from October 2025 when PC120 was initiated by the Auckland Council and Ministers directed Auckland Council to prepare the plan change to the date of receipt of your request in July 2026.

Based on this interpretation, I provide you with the following response to your request.

Response

Part 1 and Part 2

The Commission has not engaged Dr Donovan directly on PC120 at any time during the period covered by the request.

Part 3

A search of our records reveals that no information related to PC120 has been identified within scope and as a result this part of your request is refused pursuant to section 18(e) of the OIA.

Part 4

The Commission has not contracted Motu to provide advice on PC120.

Further information

In providing this response I also provide the following information that may be helpful in understanding the wider relationship between the Commission, Dr Donovan and Motu.

Dr Donovan was a member of the expert independent review panel for the Commission's Infrastructure Priorities Programme (IPP) across three review rounds. The contracts for services for this work were between the Commission and Motu, with Dr Donovan identified as the approved personnel:

- Round 1 – 3 February 2025 to 16 May 2025
- Round 2 – 39 August 2025 to 31 October 2025
- Round 3 – 10 March 2026 to 24 April 2026

For added context:

- details of the IPP can be found on our website here: <https://tewaihanga.govt.nz/infrastructure-priorities-programme>; and
- details of the expert panel that includes a brief biography for Dr Donovan can be found on our website here: <https://tewaihanga.govt.nz/news-events/leading-infrastructure-experts-appointed-to-priorities-programme>.

The Commission contracts Motu as required to provide analysis, research and reports on specific infrastructure related topics or projects. The Commission regularly publishes findings on its website and I provide the following as illustrative examples:

- “Forward guidance – Modelling local and regional infrastructure supply” available on our website here <https://media.umbraco.io/te-waihanga-30-year-strategy/oiinlynr/regional-forward-guidance-report-final.pdf>
- “Infrastructure needs analysis- Decarbonisation” available on our website here: <https://media.umbraco.io/te-waihanga-30-year-strategy/ly1aaixk/infrastructure-needs-analysis-decarbonisation.pdf>

In addition, the Commission has ongoing [patron agreements](#) with Motu Research. These patron agreements provide financial support to Motu and enable the Commission to access the professional expertise of research at Motu for smaller, ad-hoc tasks. The Commission has largely used these patron agreements to perform external reviews of our research papers, of which Dr. Donovan was a part of. Examples of papers Motu Research has reviewed for us include:

- “Forward Guidance: Results and Modelling Technical Report” (reviewed by Dr. Donovan): <https://media.umbraco.io/te-waihanga-30-year-strategy/bwjdsnj3/ina-model-technical-report-for-final-plan.pdf>
- *Benchmarking our Infrastructure: Technical Report*” (reviewed by Dr. Donovan): <https://media.umbraco.io/te-waihanga-30-year-strategy/2q0jeqxb/international-benchmarking-technical-report-for-draft-plan.pdf>

I trust this response addresses the information you requested. You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my response.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) may be published on the Commission’s website.

Yours sincerely



Peter Nunns
General Manager, Strategy