

Request for information held by Radio New Zealand relating to political coverage in lead up to General Election

Legislation	Official Information Act 1982, ss 9(2)(b)(ii), 9(2)(i)
Agency	Radio New Zealand Ltd
Ombudsman	Sir Brian Elwood
Case number(s)	W38510
Date	August 1998

Request declined on grounds of commercial prejudice—commercial prejudice not made out—discussions with requester led to satisfactory solution—requester allowed to inspect information

The representative of a political party which participated in the 1996 General Election sought information from Radio New Zealand Ltd relating to monitoring conducted by the company of its coverage of the political parties in the run-up to the election. The company declined to release the information on the grounds that it was commercially sensitive. It argued further that release might result in pressure being brought to bear on it by political lobbyists. Its objection was considered in terms of sections 9(2)(b)(ii) and 9(2)(i) of the OIA, but not accepted.

The company accepted that its reasons to withhold the information were not strong. In the circumstances, it decided to explain its concerns frankly to the requester. The requester noted the problems apprehended by the company, and accepted its offer to be allowed to inspect the information without copies being provided.

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