

14 September 2022

Section (9) (2) (a)

Section (9) (2) (a)

Our ref: OIA 98465

Tēnā koe Section (9) (2)

Official Information Act request: Swearing of affidavits and providing oaths

Thank you for your email of 17 August 2022 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), information regarding the swearing of affidavits and providing oaths in court. Specifically, you have requested:

“Does the Ministry of Justice, or any Court administered by the Ministry of Justice, or any registry office, have a policy of not allowing a person to use the bible as part of the process of giving an oath for an affidavit or any other oath?”

I have been told by staff at the Queenstown registry that they no longer allow people to swear on the bible due to “COVID” related restrictions.

If this has been a policy, when did the policy come into force, and, when was it last reviewed? May I please have a copy of any memo, policy or direction, in whatever form it took place, whereby the use of the bible in these settings has been ceased, or the use has recommenced”

The Ministry of Justice does not have any current policy of not allowing a person to use the Bible as part of the process of giving an oath for an affidavit or any other oath. I am therefore refusing your request under section 18(e) of the Act as the requested information does not exist.

We have contacted the Queenstown District Court to investigate this issue and it appears that registry staff advised you this by mistake. The Court Service Manager has since reminded staff that there are no COVID-19 restrictions on providing a Bible for this purpose.

I would like to apologise for any issues or inconveniences this may have caused.

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Act. The Ombudsman may be contacted by phone on 0800 802 602 or by email to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz

Nāku noa, nā



Jenna Bottcher Hansen
Manager, Ministerial Relations and Services