

Who is Chris Finlayson?

Christopher Finlayson holds two key portfolios in John Key's government - Minister of Treaty Settlements and Attorney General. He was appointed Associate Minister of Maori Affairs in 2011. He appointed himself a Queen's Counsel in December 2012.

Finlayson is the National Government's point man for TOW deals. To forestall any public opposition during negotiations, Finlayson and his team work in secret with the claimants, releasing news of the deal as an afterthought. He has been successful in concluding an unprecedented number of TOW deals in this way.

This process eliminates the need for annoying public consultation, and is possible because TOW deals are solely between the Crown and the claimants, bypassing the legal system.

His years in private practice representing Maori organizations in TOW cases against the Crown have served him well. Now, as he negotiates on the other side of the fence for the National-Maori Party coalition (oops, sorry, 'the Crown'), his skills in manipulating and reinventing the TOW ensure that negotiations always proceed without a hitch.

Born in 1956, Finlayson is the new generation of gay politician - ever the erudite lawyer, peppering his speeches with French and Latin picked up at university, opening art exhibits in French, attending the opera, ...

Notorious for his outbursts when cornered, Finlayson has been described as having "one of the most vitriolic approaches of any of the MPs". This temperament is illustrated well in his screaming attack in Parliament on Trevor Mallard MP as "psychotic" when challenged over dishonesty in failing to declare interest in a trust as required under parliamentary procedure.

Ignored by voters the three times he stood for Parliament in his home electorate, he later surfed into Parliament as a list MP.

His position as a list MP means that he is accountable only to his leader, and not to the electorate. Negotiations can therefore be held in secret, ensuring that deals are free from public scrutiny, until it's too late for objections.



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