

18 January 2022

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RESPONSE TO AN OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

On 13 January 2022, you requested information about the treatment of media requests as Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) requests. Your request is being dealt with under the OIA. I have outlined your specific requests and my responses to each below.

1) *Do you count media requests as OIA requests for the purposes of the OIA statistics you report every six months to the Public Service Commission?*

Yes. This is because every request for information we receive in writing is considered under the OIA. It is standard practice to consider each request on its merits and to consider the release of information and/or access to information in accordance with the provisions of the OIA.

2) *When responding to media requests do you do either of the following:*

a. *If you refuse information, such as by failing to give a direct answer to a direct question or failing to provide data requested, do you specify the section of the OIA under which that information is being withheld?*

Yes, if a request is refused or withheld, the Ministry's standard practice is to apply the appropriate withholding grounds of the OIA and to explain the reasons for the withholding ground to the requester. The Ombudsman website has helpful resources including how OIA requests are processed here: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/resources.

b. *Do you include a paragraph notifying the requester that they have the right to appeal the response to the Ombudsman?*

Yes, as noted below, it is standard practice for the Ministry to advise all requesters in writing of their right to contact the Ombudsman if they are dissatisfied with response to their request for information. Please note, that it is standard practice for Communications staff who deal with media requests to explain the reasons for delay or why a piece of information may not be released. The Ministry will ensure that we continue to advise journalists about their rights to complain to the Ombudsman if they are dissatisfied with a response, in all of our email correspondence.

In support of the principles and purposes of the OIA, the Ministry proactively publishes its responses to OIA requests. As such, this letter will be published on the Ministry for Pacific Peoples' website. Your personal details will be removed, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

Should you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact the Ministry at: uia_requests@mpp.govt.nz.

If you are dissatisfied with this response, you have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

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