



NEW ZEALAND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE



New Zealand Ministry of
Foreign Affairs and Trade
Manatū Aotearoa

29 March 2019

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Personal details removed for proactive release

I refer to your email of 26 February 2019 to the State Services Commission in which you requested the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

"1. An approximate cost estimate of the average response to an OIA request across all central government agencies including NZ Police and NZ Defence Force. This should necessarily require an averaging of:

- a. The average wage per hour typically committed to OIA responses, multiplied by*
- b. The average number of hours committed to responding to an OIA request*

This can be expressed as: $\Sigma(\text{average wage}_{\text{agency}} \times \text{average number of hours}_{\text{agency}}) / \text{number of agencies}.$

1. For the period 1 January 2017 – 1 January 2019, the number of OIA requests sent to all central government agencies including NZ Police and NZ Defence Force from or on behalf of the New Zealand Tax Payers Union.

2. Please also provide a narrative explaining the method used to determine the average wage and average number of hours across agencies as requested in 1a and 1b of this OIA request."

On 11 March 2019, your request was then transferred to a number of agencies, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT).

We have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

We do not collate time spent specifically on responding to OIA requests. Please find, attached in Annex 1, links to publicly available OIA data regarding Ministry requests and responses.

As we do not hold the specific information you have requested we are unable to answer questions 1a and 1b. We are refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) of the OIA, as the information requested does not exist. There is no obligation under the OIA for an agency to create information in order to respond to a request.

Regarding the second half of your request, question 1 for the period 1 January 2017 to 1 January 2019, we have identified 14 requests from the Taxpayers' Union. Regarding question 2, as above, we do not hold information specifically relating to the average wage and the average number of hours committed to answering OIA requests. We are therefore refusing question 2 under section 18(e) of the OIA, as the information does not exist.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details redacted) may be published on the Ministry's website.

You have the right under section 28(3) of the OIA to seek a review of this response by the Ombudsman.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Adams
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Annex 1 Publicly available information

There are several sources of publicly available information that may be of interest to you. These resources are set out below, with particular reference to information that may be of relevance to your four requests.

MFAT Annual Reports

MFAT's Annual Reports contain some information about OIA requests and ministerial correspondence. The relevant reports for the past three financial years are set out in the table below. These reports are hyperlinked for ease of access.

Hyperlinked title	Pages relevant to your request
MFAT Annual Report 2017-18	Pages 53 and 63
MFAT Annual Report 2016-17	Pages 37 and 43
MFAT Annual Report 2015-16	Pages 37, 38 and 46

MFAT Annual Review

MFAT reports to the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Select Committee (FADTC) twice per year. Please see [MFAT's Annual Review 2016/17](#) as an example of what is provided. For part 1 of your request, information on Official Information and Privacy Act requests begins on page 30 of the document. Further information about select committees, and a link to information available for downloading, is available on Parliament's website at: <https://www.parliament.nz/en/get-involved/features/select-committees-busy-with-annual-reviews/>.

State Services Commission OIA Statistics

The State Services Commission (SSC) publishes OIA statistics covering government departments and Crown entities subject to the OIA every six months. Further information and data files that can be downloaded are available on SSC's website at: <http://www.ssc.govt.nz/official-information-statistics>.