



1/05/2024

Rep Albert

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Tēnā koe Rep Albert

**OIA: Rep Albert – Ministry employees working remotely from overseas.**

Thank you for your email of 1 March 2024 to the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) requesting the following information:

- 1. How many employees (permanent and fixed-term) are working remotely from overseas? (Focusing on Fiji and Australia)*
- 2. Which division or directorate those employees are assigned to? (Please list the division/directorate and the number of employees working from overseas)*
- 3. What is the business justification to have those employees working remotely from overseas?*
- 4. Which position within the Ministry approved the overseas remote work?*
- 5. With the public service cuts, how do we justify having employees working overseas while people in New Zealand will lose their jobs?*

Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

As of 1 March 2024, the total number of Ministry staff members working remotely from overseas is four.

The divisions in which these employees are assigned to, or rather Business Groups (when referring to the functions of the Ministry) are as follows:

- Te Pou Hanganga, Matihiko | Infrastructure & Digital
- Te Pae Aronui | Operations & Integration Group
- Te Pou Kaupapahere | Policy



Given the very low number of Ministry employees working overseas, we are withholding all information pertaining to their business justification under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of natural persons. To release information of this nature would risk the disclosure of personal information that could lead to identifying the employee(s) in question.

Since the date of your request, one of these arrangements has now ceased, another is due to complete before 30 June 2024, a third is in arrangement that is in place while the individual works out their notice period post-resignation, and the fourth is in a permanent role fulfilling an extended notice period.

With regard to **question four** of your request, the decision to approve these requests to work remotely from overseas ultimately sits with Hautū | Deputy Secretarys. With regard to the arrangements listed above, the Hautū for the business units in question were the final approvers for the arrangements regarding these four staff members working remotely from overseas.

As you can see from the numbers reported above, it is extremely unusual for the Ministry to have employees working remotely from overseas. There is no single reason why this would happen, and each employee's circumstances and reasoning for working abroad would have been considered and assessed on a case-by-case basis.

As required under section 9(1) of the Act, I have considered the public interest in releasing the information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act. I do not consider the public interest considerations favouring the release of this information are sufficient to outweigh the need to withhold it at this time.

Thank you again for your email. You have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review my decision on your request, in accordance with section 28 of the Act. You can do this by writing to [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz) or to Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Nāku noa, nā



Zoe Griffiths  
**Hautū | Deputy Secretary**  
**Te Pou Rangatōpū | Corporate**