



## Prime Minister

Minister for Arts, Culture & Heritage

Minister for Child Poverty Reduction

Minister for National Security & Intelligence

30 AUG 2019

Matthew Hooton  
fyi-request-10442-7f03430d@requests.fyi.org.nz

Ref: PMO 127-2019

Dear Matthew Hooton

### **Official Information Act request for a timeline of all communications between PMO and the Offices of the Minister of Finance/Associate Ministers, DPMC and Treasury**

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request, received on 4 June 2019. You requested:

*"...a timeline of all contact between all Treasury and DPMC officials and staff (including seconded staff) in the PMO and the offices of the Minister and Associate Ministers of Finance between 5pm and 9pm on 28 May.*

*This includes face-to-face discussions, phone calls, emails whether on public or private email addresses, texts, private WhatsApp, FaceBook or other similar messages, and any other communications whatsoever..."*

The time limit for deciding on your request was extended on 3 July 2019 by an additional 20 working days. The extension was required because your request necessitated consultations to make a decision on your request.

In respect to your request for the production of a timeline, I note that a request under the Act cannot require the creation of new information. However, the details of interactions that the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) had in the scope of your request are detailed below.

Please note that following the clarification of your request on 5 June 2019, I have interpreted it to cover communications between PMO and: the Minister of Finance, Hon Grant Robertson and his Office, the Associate Ministers of Finance and their respective Offices, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), and the Treasury.

With respect to communications between the Office of the Minister of Finance and this Office, there were a number of interactions over the course of the time period requested, as you would expect under these circumstances. A full record of all of those interactions is not held, but it included the Prime Minister, Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern being briefed by the Minister of Finance following his 7:15pm meeting with the Secretary to the Treasury, Gabriel Makhlof. The Minister of Finance also sent a text message at 7:17pm requesting that PMO attend his meeting with Mr Makhlof.

As covered by the State Services Commission (SSC) *investigation into statements made and actions taken by the Secretary to the Treasury, Gabriel Makhlof*, of the Treasury determined to refer the unauthorised access of Budget 2019 information to the Police at 6:14pm. Following this he briefed the Minister of Finance at 7:15pm. Two staff members from my Office attended

that meeting. This Office had no further communication with the Treasury during the time period requested beyond that.

No communications with any of the Associate Ministers of Finance or their respective Offices have been identified within the time period requested.

With respect to communications with DPMC, the Prime Minister had three phone calls with the Chief Executive of DPMC, Brook Barrington, in the time period requested. This were at 7:45pm, 7:52pm and 8:45pm. Additionally, DPMC had conversations with PMO at 5pm, 8:06pm and 8:49pm.

Please note that I considered your request for this request to be given urgency, however, I felt this was outweighed by the need to allow due process in respect of the SSC investigation into the actions and statements of Mr Makhlouf and the need to ensure the response to this request was accurate.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

Yours sincerely



Raj Nahna  
Chief of Staff