



**Te Tari Taiwhenua  
Internal Affairs**

7 October 2019

J Stein

Via email: [fyi-request-11225-e99e2c19@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-11225-e99e2c19@requests.fyi.org.nz)

45 Pipitea St  
PO Box 805  
Wellington 6140  
New Zealand  
Phone +64 4 495 7200  
Fax +64 4 495 7222  
Website [dia.govt.nz](http://dia.govt.nz)

Dear Sir/Madam

**Official Information Act (“OIA”) request dated 15 September 2019 (ref OIA19200243)**

Thank you for your OIA request dated 15 September 2019 to the Department of Internal Affairs (the “Department”).

**Your OIA request**

You requested the following information which is quoted in full below:

*“I have been reading online articles as part of some research I am doing on data breaches. I found a reference to a DIA data breach in 2015 in one of the comments in the comments section under one news article. I have searched online and cannot find any public information about this. So if it did happen it looks like the public may not have been notified.*

*The comment read “When the Internal Affairs Financial Integrity team (now called the AML team) emailed confidential information about hundreds of businesses out to each other in late 2015....”*

*I am hoping to find out*

*A. If it happened, and if it did*

*B. Exactly what happened and how and what information was sent out that should not have been C. If the public were notified and if not why not*

*The comment also said that there was human error involved and that it would not have happened if there were more than “one layer of protection” in the processes. So if this is correct I would also like to find out D. What process or system changes have been made to prevent it happening again E. What were the position(s) of the person or people who made the human errors and how does DIA decide if they are responsible or capable enough to be in positions where they have the potential to make errors like this F. What extra training they got after the incident and what has changed for new people being trained for those roles G. Whether any disciplinary information was taken H. I would also like a copy of the investigation report from the investigation of the incident please.”*

**Response to your request**

The Department notes that your request is about an alleged data breach, and for ease of reference in this letter the Department refers to the “Alleged Data Breach” as meaning “a data breach by the Financial Integrity Team of the Department which allegedly occurred in late 2015 involving the release of confidential information by way of email to hundreds of businesses.”

The Department searched extensively through its information technology systems in order to assess whether or not the Alleged Data Breach occurred. Our search of those systems did not reveal any information (including reports) about the Alleged Data Breach.

In addition, the Department discussed this matter with current key officials of the Anti-Money Laundering Group of the Department (formerly the Financial Integrity Unit) and former staff of the Financial Integrity Unit and no one had any recollection of the Alleged Data Breach.

Given the lack of information in our systems and the fact that no one in the Department recollects the Alleged Data Breach, the Department is refusing your request under section 18(e) of the OIA.

The Department wishes to invite you to contact us directly if there is any further information that we can provide you to assist you in your work.

### **Approach to safeguarding information**

We wish to take the opportunity to note that the Department takes its obligations to protect personal information (information about identifiable individuals) and confidential information of businesses very seriously. It is a critical part of our role to respect and protect information that is entrusted to us. We also have procedures in place to ensure that everything is done to prevent a data breach from happening.

The Department notes that the Privacy Act 1993 is in the process of being amended and soon it will incorporate new rules for organisations to report privacy breaches immediately to the Privacy Commissioner. As a consequence of those amendments, the Department will be updating its internal privacy guidance so as to ensure that everything is done to minimise the harm to both the people affected by a privacy breach and the Department.

### **Recourse to the Ombudsman**

If you are dissatisfied with the Department's decision on your request for information, you have the right, under section 28 of the OIA, to make a complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman. The Office of the Ombudsman can be contacted by phone on 0800 802 602, via post at PO Box 10152 Wellington, or via email to [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz).

Yours sincerely



**Mike Stone**  
Director  
AML Group