

29 November 2019

Mr Jeremy Puger
fyi-request-11367-f008040f@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Puger

Thank you for your request made under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), received on 3 October 2019. This request was extended by 20 working days on 25 October 2019.

I will answer each of your questions in turn below.

Air Travel

Question 1. *How many of your staff has travelled by air (obviously with all of these I mean where the agency has paid for it), and how many the total flights were and how much it cost all up?*

Inland Revenue has received detailed travel information from its travel agent, Orbit, to respond to your request. The below tables show the number of staff that have travelled by air, as well as the total number of flights they have taken, separated into three categories (Domestic, Tasman, and International).

For the 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years, providing the number of staff who travelled by air, and the total number of flights taken, would involve substantive manual effort. Accordingly, I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(f) of the OIA, on the basis that it would require substantial collation and research to provide the information.

2016/17 Financial Year

Region	Total # of Travellers	Total # of Flights
Domestic	2,014	13,482
Tasman	89	246
International	59	468
Total	2,162	14,196

2017/18 Financial Year

Region	Total # of Travellers	Total # of Flights
Domestic	2,079	22,105
Tasman	106	314
International	64	543
Total	2,249	22,962

Ref: 200IA1108

2018/19 Financial Year

Region	Total # of Travellers	Total # of Flights
Domestic	2,251	30,219
Tasman	82	244
International	66	446
Total	2,399	30,909

Inland Revenue regularly releases information regarding the cost of air travel as part of its response to the Finance and Expenditure Select Committee (FEC) Annual Review. I am therefore refusing your request for the total cost of travel under section 18(d) of the OIA, as this information is publicly available. You can find this information on the Parliament website using the link below:

FEC Annual Review 2018/19

- parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/52SCFE_EVI_92665_FE24711/c3ecf67126266871c590fbb1c5a3fe7b72e088be
- Q117 (pg. 235) provides domestic travel cost for the 2014/15 – 2017/18 financial years
- Q119 (pg. 238) provides international travel costs for the 2014/15 – 2017/18 financial years

Question 2. *What was the purpose and benefit to the taxpayer of each trip?*

International travel

For international travel, the purpose of each trip is included in Inland Revenue's response to the FEC Annual Review. I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(d) of the OIA, as this information is publicly available. You can find this information on the parliament website using the links below:

FEC Annual Review 2014/15 – Q98 pg. 137

- parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/51SCFE_EVI_00DBSCH_ANR_66444_1_A457400/ebab0903a17a2a74ea897ae1ad9d338da71cca5e

FEC Annual Review 2015/16 – Q93 pg. 177

- parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/51SCFE_EVI_00DBSCH_ANR_71327_1_A537288/e5a2cee7f19142e680ddc03462a60120219b8be2

FEC Annual Review 2016/17 – Q92 pg. 202

- parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/52SCFE_EVI_75224_642/41fe9cce4318a5f1042fe8d80309bd4e3ec6f1f8

FEC Annual Review 2017/18 – Q98 pg. 201

- parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/52SCFE_EVI_80723_FE2652/1f6becac8baaf65aad976540917d61b599fe3fd9

FEC Annual Review 2018/19 – Q119 pg. 238

- parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/52SCFE_EVI_92665_FE24711/c3ecf67126266871c590fbb1c5a3fe7b72e088be

Domestic travel

Some of the functions and services delivered by Inland Revenue require staff to travel across New Zealand. Staff may travel in order to conduct investigations and attend court hearings, attend or provide training and development, attend events or conferences related to their role, meet with key stakeholders, partners and clients based in different locations, or to provide specialist support to staff in other offices.

The exact purpose of domestic travel is discussed between the approving manager and the travelling official before they travel. This information is not centrally collated. The information is distributed across Inland Revenue and would need to be collated manually from each official. Accordingly, I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(f) of the OIA, as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation and research.

Inland Revenue does not record information about the specific benefit to the taxpayer for each domestic trip. I am therefore refusing this part of your request under section 18(g) of the OIA as the information requested is not held by the department.

Question 3. *For each trip why was a remote alternative not used? Like for conferences, a lot of them have remote viewing dial-ins so you don't have to travel to attend. Meetings can usually be done by conference call or skype. Things like that. So, there are very few situations where staff would actually have to travel by air. So, in cases where you have, could you explain if there was no remote alternative available? And if there was, why was it not used?*

International travel

I refer you to my response to question 2 (above). Inland Revenue's FEC responses explain the purpose of each international trip made between the 2014/15 and 2017/18 financial years. With international travel being used by staff to attend key events, such as international tax conferences or to meet with representatives of foreign tax offices, remote viewing dial-ins would not be an appropriate alternative.

Domestic travel

Inland Revenue is currently rolling out a 'Working Smarter' initiative. Working Smarter is an approach to how we work – improvements that can be made to our tools, environments, policies, and processes are all being considered to make sure we work in the smartest way possible. This includes encouraging meetings to be scheduled with virtual meeting options. This ensures that teams are more connected no matter where they are physically located. While we encourage our people to choose virtual options, there are times where traveling will be the most suitable way of working.

Questions 4 & 5. *How much has been spent on accommodation, and for how many people and nights in these times too? ...how much on other expenses like meals and allowances?*

As with question 1 (above), Inland Revenue has received this information from its travel agent, Orbit. They have been able to provide the total accommodation spend for domestic, Tasman, and international travel.

For the 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years, providing the hotel and incidental spend, as well as the number of nights and travellers, would involve substantive manual effort. Additionally, Orbit were unable to further break down the total amount spent on incidentals to the individual categories requested (meals, allowances, etc.). Accurately categorising this expenditure would involve manually checking each invoice.

I am therefore refusing these parts of your request under section 18(f) of the OIA, on the basis that it would require substantial collation and research to provide the information.

2016/17 Financial Year

Region	Total Hotel Spend	Spend Excluding Incidentals	Hotel Incidentals	Total # of Nights	Total # of Travellers
Domestic	\$2,225,798	\$1,963,630	\$262,168	11,995	1,678
Tasman	\$54,934	\$54,909	\$25	182	54
International	\$148,419	\$145,660	\$2,759	612	44
Total	\$2,429,151	\$2,164,199	\$264,952	12,789	1,776

2017/18 Financial Year

Region	Total Hotel Spend	Spend Excluding Incidentals	Hotel Incidentals	Total # of Nights	Total # of Travellers
Domestic	\$2,481,899	\$2,223,449	\$258,450	13,374	1,654
Tasman	\$98,487	\$95,501	\$2,986	348	99
International	\$122,478	\$120,582	\$1,896	316	94
Total	\$2,702,864	\$2,439,532	\$263,332	14,038	1,847

2018/19 Financial Year

Region	Total Hotel Spend	Spend Excluding Incidentals	Hotel Incidentals	Total # of Nights	Total # of Travellers
Domestic	\$3,883,068	\$3,517,940	\$365,128	20,700	1,860
Tasman	\$67,141	\$66,732	\$409	224	65
International	\$105,470	\$104,176	\$1,294	324	44
Total	\$4,055,678	\$3,688,848	\$366,830	21,248	1,969

Question 6. *Do staff of different jobs/ranks/levels get different types or levels of accommodation? If so, can you explain why?*

Inland Revenue staff receive the same level of accommodation when travelling for work, no matter what role they are in.

Question 7. *Going into the future, do you have plans to reduce air travel? If you do, could you explain these plans and if you have set any targets for it.*

Orbit currently provides reporting on our air and ground (car rental and airport taxis) kilometres travelled. For the year ended June 2019, Inland Revenue's international air travel reduced by 18% (657,194 kms) from the previous year, however domestic travel increased by 30%, giving a 17% net increase of 2,280,955 kms of air travel.

As part of the All of Government Generation 2 Travel Management Services contract, which commenced in June 2019, Orbit has committed to deliver a 30% carbon emission reduction for government agencies over the first three years (Y1 15%, Y2 10%, Y3 5%) with 5% per year thereafter. The contract has the potential to run to 2028 if all Rights of Renewal are invoked – an overall carbon emission reduction on our travel profile of 60% by 2028.

Orbit is currently in the process of developing full Carbon Emissions reporting as per the new contract requirements in conjunction with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and the Ministry for the Environment.

Packaging and Recycling

Question 1. *Do you have recycling facilities in all of your premises? If you do not, please explain why.*

Inland Revenue provides recycling bins, as well as bins for organic waste, on all premises.

Question 2. *Do you actively encourage or make your staff recycle? If you do, please explain how.*

While Inland Revenue does not enforce recycling, the provision of both recycling and organic bins in all kitchen areas gives staff the option to separate their waste as appropriate.

Question 3. *Do you have rules aimed at encouraging other staff environmentally friendly behaviour, such as banning staff from bringing disposable cups onto the premises?*

Inland Revenue does not enforce rules aimed at encouraging environmentally friendly behaviour. Additionally, there are no bans on items such as disposable cups on any of its premises.

Question 4. *If you have cafes or similar things in your premises, do you require them to use environmentally healthy options such as re-usable cutlery and recyclable packaging?*

While there is no mandatory requirement for the cafes situated on Inland Revenue's premises to use environmentally friendly options, the current cafes provide re-usable cutlery and crockery to customers.

Encouraging Good Behaviour and Attunement with the Natural World

Question 1. *Do all of your offices have plants? If so, what is the ratio of plants to workers? Do you ensure that providers that look after the plants use sustainable and environmentally friendly options in their practices (for example pesticide choices)?*

Inland Revenue only provides plants in parts of our Featherston Street office in Wellington. The Office Accommodation Standards and Guidelines do allow for individuals or teams to personalise their workplace with pot plants, although Inland Revenue does not directly fund these plants.

The current ratio of plants provided by Inland Revenue to staff in our Featherston Street office is 0.052:1

The plants provided in our Featherston Street office are maintained by three service providers. Each of these service providers use sustainable green products.

Question 2. *Do you have programmes for encouraging your staff to make more environmentally friendly choices outside of work?*

Inland Revenue does not operate any programmes related to staff behaviour outside of work.

Question 3. *Do you encourage your staff to be more interconnected with the natural world by hosting or promoting practices such as mindfulness, meditation, earthing or Tai Chi?*

Inland Revenue staff can access the Hauora Hub, a wellness website, through Inland Revenue's intranet. Hauora Hub provides information, activities, competitions, and other resources that can support our people's well-being. Many of the articles and information relate to practices such as mindfulness and meditation, how they can be of benefit, and how to incorporate them into their daily lives. Access to Hauora Hub is entirely voluntary.

Inland Revenue also operates an intranet site on mental health, which includes tips and links to sites that support mental health, and a healthy lifestyle. It also includes links to mindfulness and meditation resources.

Some offices have independently organised lunchtime yoga sessions, or similar activities, which are employee driven.

Question 4. *Do you take any steps to increase staff knowledge and awareness of environmental issues in general?*

As mentioned in my response to question 3, Inland Revenue provides access to many resources through its intranet. Alongside information supporting our people's well-being, there are also resources that promote environmental awareness. Once again, access to these resources is entirely voluntary.

Right of Review

If you disagree with my decisions on your OIA request, you can ask an Inland Revenue review officer to review my decisions. To ask for an internal review, please email the Commissioner of Inland Revenue at: CommissionersCorrespondence@ird.govt.nz.

Alternatively, under section 28(3) of the OIA, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision. You can contact the office of the Ombudsman by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Thank you for your request. I trust that the information provided is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely



Simon Mason
Acting Deputy Commissioner, Corporate Integrity & Assurance