



31 October 2019

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Dear Jeremy

**Your Official Information Act request OIA 1920-0287**

I write regarding your Official Information Act (Act) request, which was received by the Department of Internal Affairs (Department) on 3 October 2019.

You have requested:

*I am seeking information for the last five years about government activity that relates to climate change. I am wanting to find out for each year:*

***Air Travel***

*(please do domestic and international air travel separately)*

- A. *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.*
- B. *What was the purpose and benefit to the taxpayer of each trip*
- C. *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?*
- D. *When staff are travelling there are extra expenses too. How much has been spent on accommodation and for how many people and nights in these times too?*
- E. *As per D but how much on other expenses like meals and allowances?*
- F. *Do staff of different jobs/ranks/levels get different types or levels of accommodation. If so can you explain why?*
- G. *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 and things*

### **Packaging and Recycling**

- A. *Do you have recycling facilities in all of your premises? If you do not please explain why*
- B. *Do you actively encourage or make your staff recycle? If you do please explain how*
- C. *Do you have rules aimed at encouraging other staff environmentally friendly behaviour such as banning staff from bringing disposable cups onto the premises?*
- D. *If you have cafes or similar things in your premises do you require them to use environmentally healthy options such a re-usable cutlery and recyclable packaging?*

### **Encouraging Good Behaviour and Attunement with the natural world**

- A. *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)?*
- B. *Do you have programmes for encouraging your staff to make more environmentally friendly choices outside of work?*
- C. *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?*
- D. *Do you take any steps to increase staff knowledge and awareness of environmental issues in general?*

### **Response to your request**

#### **Air Travel**

- A. **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.**
- D. **When staff are travelling there are extra expenses too. How much has been spent on accommodation and for how many people and nights in these times too?**
- E. **As per D but how much on other expenses like meals and allowances?**

The information relevant to your request provided below is for the previous five financial years from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2019.

The Department's preferred suppliers for travel management are Orbit Travel and Air New Zealand Tandem Travel under the All-of-Government (AoG) contract. The Department has received detailed travel information from these suppliers in response to your request (refer table below). Approximately 97 percent of departmental airline travel expenditure was booked through Orbit Travel and Tandem Travel in 2018/19 (96 percent in 2017/18).

Where travel was booked by staff through other travel suppliers, we are unable to provide the breakdown of this portion, as travel information is not held in the Department's financial system in a way where we can extract the data without manually reviewing hundreds of individual transactions and invoices. We are therefore refusing this part of your request under section 18(f) - due to substantial collation and research required. However, spending on travel booked through these other travel suppliers is still included in the overall travel spend shown in the table below.



## Te Tari Taiwhenua Internal Affairs

Breakdown of domestic/Trans-Tasman (includes Australia) and international travel by staff.

Financial year	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
	Domestic Trans-Tasman	International								
Number of staff members travel by air <sup>1</sup>	1,464	91	1,533	79	1,517	92	1,443	126	1,780	131
Number of flights <sup>2</sup>	10,225	259	10,087	216	10,888	242	9,253	472	12,563	388
Total airfares (\$000)	1,892	417	1,688	454	1,800	339	1,504	672	2,111	815
Total accommodation cost including all travel types <sup>3</sup> (\$000)	629	134	690	150	776	112	656	191	856	225
Number of staff members travel with accommodation cost (excludes group bookings) <sup>4</sup>	897	66	980	61	999	67	925	86	1,147	110
Number of group accommodation bookings <sup>4</sup>	-	-	1	-	1	-	3	-	4	-
Number of nights for accommodation	4,379	365	4,542	329	4,783	511	4,202	638	5,295	624
Other expenses <sup>5</sup> (\$000)	2,992	69	3,775	49	4,087	24	3,168	67	3,966	71
<b>Total travel related cost</b>	<b>5,513</b>	<b>620</b>	<b>6,152</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>6,663</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>5,328</b>	<b>930</b>	<b>6,933</b>	<b>1,111</b>

- Number of staff members who travel by air** – Staff travel is calculated by the number of individual staff members who have travelled in each financial year (irrespective of how many times)
- Number of flights** – each trip is counted as one flight, i.e, return flights are counted as two flights
- Accommodation** – due to the way accommodation costs are held in our financial system we are only able to provide the costs across all travel types, i.e, land and air transport.
- Number of staff members who travel with accommodation costs** – as we are unable to separate accommodation numbers where staff have travelled as a group, we have provided numbers of individual traveller's and group bookings separately. This is calculated by the number of individual staff members who have travelled and incurred accommodation costs in each financial year (irrespective of how many times)
- Other expenses** – this category includes meals, allowances, rental cars or other transport costs, taxi charges and incidental travel expenses. For domestic travel 'other expenses' also includes air and accommodation expenditure that was not booked through Orbit and Tandem travel as well as costs associated with visits from foreign dignitaries facilitated by the Department.



## **B. What was the purpose and benefit to the taxpayer of each trip**

### Domestic travel

The Department is a very diverse organisation and some functions and services the Department delivers requires domestic travel, such as providing support to:

- Reviews and inquiries engaging with the public across New Zealand
- Our community operations offices which are located throughout New Zealand
- Local government bodies and ethnic communities across the country
- Diplomatic activity of the Government and national events.

Staff may also travel in order to conduct on-site inspections of reporting entities, investigations and litigation/judicial 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.

Reasons for travel and the suitability of alternatives are discussed between the approving managers and the travelling staff member before they travel. These are not centrally collated. As the information is distributed across the Department and would need to be collated manually from thousands of individuals, we are refusing this part of your request under section 18(f) of the Act as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation and research.

The Department does not record information about the specific benefit to the taxpayer for domestic travel. We are therefore refusing this part of your request under section 18(g) of the Act as the information requested is not held by the Department.

Travel expenditure paid for by the Department must be for departmental business, and the traveller should not be out of pocket for costs associated with the travel, nor should they benefit financially. Travel plans should have a justifiable business purpose and be made with integrity.

### International travel

The Department regularly releases information about the purpose and outcomes achieved for international travel as part of its response to the Governance and Administration Select Committee Annual Review. We refer you to this information publicly available on the Parliamentary website from 2014/15 to 2017/18 in the links below:

Governance and Administration Select Committee Annual Review 2014-15 - Q98 page 57.

Appendix 10 page 53

- Response: [https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/51SCGA\\_EVI\\_00DBSCH\\_ANR\\_66385\\_1\\_A493015/b0b2d8b02e93206e01f7814504d10564678d59bc](https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/51SCGA_EVI_00DBSCH_ANR_66385_1_A493015/b0b2d8b02e93206e01f7814504d10564678d59bc)
- Appendix: [https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/51SCGA\\_EVI\\_00DBSCH\\_ANR\\_66385\\_1\\_A493131/d6f77ad8d6ec67d5613ab681933e0cfd840d5a4](https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/51SCGA_EVI_00DBSCH_ANR_66385_1_A493131/d6f77ad8d6ec67d5613ab681933e0cfd840d5a4)

Governance and Administration Select Committee Annual Review 2015-16 - Q93 page 72.

Appendix 7 page 122

- Response: [https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/51SCGA\\_EVI\\_00DBSCH\\_ANR\\_71549\\_1\\_A541755/80779f902f122c29a178a5b06aaa33851d10a76c](https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/51SCGA_EVI_00DBSCH_ANR_71549_1_A541755/80779f902f122c29a178a5b06aaa33851d10a76c)
- Appendix: [https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/51SCGA\\_EVI\\_00DBSCH\\_ANR\\_71549\\_1\\_A541756/7b305f31e9c29fa44e32cdb8230ce6584b9a30ea](https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/51SCGA_EVI_00DBSCH_ANR_71549_1_A541756/7b305f31e9c29fa44e32cdb8230ce6584b9a30ea)

Governance and Administration Select Committee Annual Review 2016-17 - Q92 page 76.

Appendix 9 page 140

- Response: [https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/52SCGA\\_EVI\\_75468\\_468/2214a5701993523cd44aaeca578bc1e0385c8e16](https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/52SCGA_EVI_75468_468/2214a5701993523cd44aaeca578bc1e0385c8e16)
- Appendix: [https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/52SCGA\\_EVI\\_75468\\_469/ceffa9e615403b304d7e1807cbf7a6fbb70b253c](https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/52SCGA_EVI_75468_469/ceffa9e615403b304d7e1807cbf7a6fbb70b253c)

Governance and Administration Select Committee Annual Review 2017-18 - Q98 page 80.

Appendix 10 page 158

- Response: [https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/52SCGA\\_EVI\\_83830\\_GA2570/53579ebc46f901e7d6901e49e286197800c8bf7b](https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/52SCGA_EVI_83830_GA2570/53579ebc46f901e7d6901e49e286197800c8bf7b)
- Appendix: [https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/52SCGA\\_EVI\\_83830\\_GA2569/160c0bc6cf1ab408c930a4cdc89c972a845a250a](https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/52SCGA_EVI_83830_GA2569/160c0bc6cf1ab408c930a4cdc89c972a845a250a)

The Department is currently preparing the information for the Governance and Administration Select Committee Annual Review 2018/19. This information will be publicly released after the Select Committee has had the opportunity to review it and will be available on the Parliamentary website in late 2019 or early 2020 at the website address here: <https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/submissions-and-advice/>

The Department has decided to provide this information to you as soon as the Select Committee has had the opportunity to review it. We anticipate we will be able to provide it to you on the FYI website by mid-December 2019.

**C. 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?**

I refer you to my response to part B -Air Travel (above). This part of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation and research.

The Department's travel policy sets the expectation that airline or other travel should not be the default option for engaging with individuals in other locations, and explicitly mandates that air travel must only be booked if justified after alternative methods of conducting business, such as tele- or video-conference, have been considered. The majority of employees are equipped with laptops that enable video-conferencing and a number of meeting rooms also enable this technology. However, there are circumstances where air travel is necessary due to the nature of our work. If travel is identified to be necessary in the circumstances, staff must seek approval for the proposed travel.

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

The Department's travel policy applies to all staff and does not set different standards or entitlements according to the job/rank or level of the employee.

The Department's travel policy states that travellers are required to utilise Government preferred suppliers where possible, though non-preferred suppliers can still be booked via the travel management company when preferred suppliers are not available; and the proximity of the accommodation to where the traveller will be working should be taken into consideration.

All travel is to be on the lowest appropriate and practicable fare/rate available at the time of booking. Travellers who book trips other than the lowest appropriate fare/rate are required to provide a business justification for doing so when seeking approval for travel. The traveller's personal preferences or any airline club membership must not influence the selection of flights and accommodation.

**G. 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 and things**

Refer to question C (above). Air Travel is not the default option for engaging with individuals in other locations and alternative methods of conducting business must be considered before air travel is undertaken.

The Department strives to minimise its broader environmental impacts where practicable. The 2017 relocation of staff from the Lambton Quay and Featherston Street buildings to 45 Pipitea Street, represented a consolidation of the Department's footprint and a targeted shift to more future-focused ways of working, including providing greater support for digital direct engagement channels such as video, skype and teleconferencing. The majority of staff have the capability to work remotely. On any given day approximately 10-20 percent of staff will be working remotely, contributing to a reduction in land travel by staff.

Recommendations are also currently under consideration to enter a certified program to provide emissions offsets for all air travel undertaken by Department.

### **Packaging and Recycling**

#### **A. Do you have recycling facilities in all of your premises? If you do not please explain why**

There are recycling facilities in all sites where the Department has responsibility for providing facilities management services.

#### **B. Do you actively encourage or make your staff recycle? If you do please explain how**

The Department rolled out a recycling programme in 2013, building on the success of recycling programmes already running across Archives New Zealand, the National Library of New Zealand and our 120 Victoria Street building. This has reduced our environmental footprint in land-waste. Separate recycling bins are provided for staff to collect landfill, glass, plastics and cans, and organic waste. Staff are encouraged to separate waste into the bins available. The Department's intranet includes a domain with resources and tips to encourage recycling practices, including recycling 'myth-busters' and links to sustainability sites, as well as supporting staff to discuss and promote recycling and climate related activities amongst themselves on the staff intranet forum.

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

The Department has a guide for staff specifically focused on recycling disposable cups. Most floors of departmental buildings are equipped with ceramic coffee cups. Staff are encouraged to use keep cups rather than disposable cups.

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

There is no requirement for cafes on the Department's premises to use environmentally healthy options, however some cafes, including the one located on the ground floor of our Pipitea St Wellington office, have chosen to provide such options for their customers, e.g. "Again Again" Cups and recyclable packaging.

**Encouraging Good Behaviour and Attunement with the natural world**

**A. 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)?**

The Department does not provide plants in offices. However, in some of our larger offices plants are provided in reception areas and adjacent public areas.

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

The Department has a programme of work to create a positive work environment. One of the ways we do this is by encouraging staff to share information about some of the activities they do outside of work. This includes programmes that support the environment e.g. taking part in tree planting activities to protect the environment to help build stronger and more resilient communities.

**C. 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?**

The Department's Wellbeing Roadmap is based on Mason Durie's *Te whare tapa whā* holistic model of health. The model emphasises being in touch with the natural environment through 'whenua', the land, 'tinana' the physical environment and 'hinegaro' – the spiritual and mental aspects of health. We run a staff wellbeing programme grounded in the Mental Health Foundation's 'Five Ways to Wellbeing'. This promotes connection with nature and includes activities such as mindfulness and meditation. We also encourage our people to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

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

The Department increasingly considers environmental impacts in our business activity and this has had a positive impact on the wider culture of the Department. Refer to the response to Recycling and Packaging - part B.

This year, we also opted for a digital Annual Report, saving an estimated 6km in paper by not printing as many copies as in past years.

Where the Department has refused information requested under section 18(f) of the Act due to substantial collation and research, we have in each case considered whether this collation could be managed by extending the request timeframe or fixing a charge. In each case these options were unsuitable as it was not possible to calculate how much time or resource would be needed for the collation.

The Department also considered in each case whether to contact you and invite you to refine the scope of your request, however due to the way the information is held, and the complexity of collation, we were not able to identify options for narrowing the scope in a way that would inform the other data we are providing to you.

If you would like to discuss these parts of your request further, or if you have any feedback or questions about the Department's response, we invite you to contact us directly at [OIA@dia.govt.nz](mailto:OIA@dia.govt.nz).

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or Freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Kate Wareham', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Kate Wareham**  
Deputy Chief Executive  
Organisational Capability and Services