



3 February 2021

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John Luke

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Dear John Luke

Official Information Act 1982 request 2021-0353 Members of Community Sector Reference Group

I refer to your Official Information Act (OIA) request to the Department of Internal Affairs (Department) on 17 December 2020. You have requested the following information regarding the Community Sector Reference Group (referred to on page 6 of the Briefing to the Incoming Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector (BIM)):

1. *Who are the members of this group?*
2. *What are the members pay rate?*
3. *Did the Department call for expressions of interest?*
4. *Where did the Department advertise this position?*
5. *In the document (BIM) you have also mentioned that they already had an online meeting. May I have the minutes of this particular meeting?*

Background information

During the initial Alert Level 4 COVID-19 lockdown, between 22 April and 30 April 2020, the previous Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector held virtual meetings with representatives from the community and philanthropic sectors to discuss the impacts of COVID-19 on communities. It was following these meetings that the then Minister agreed to establish a Community Sector Reference Group (the Reference Group) to enable direct engagement between Government and community and philanthropic representatives.

The Department is currently working with the new Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector on the approach and development of the Group, and as such the Reference Group does not yet exist. The new Minister has not yet agreed to the establishment of the Reference Group.

Response to your request

1. As the new Minister has not yet agreed to the establishment of the Reference Group, its members have not been confirmed. I am therefore refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information does not exist.

2. As the Reference Group is in the development stage, specific details including whether the position will be voluntary or if fees are to be paid are yet to be confirmed. However, if it is decided that a fee will be paid it will be done in accordance with the Cabinet Office fees framework for advisory groups.
3. The Department has not called for expressions of interest for the Reference Group.
4. The Department has not advertised for these positions.
5. As mentioned above, the online meeting that is referred to in the BIM was a series of 'Community Conversations' via Zoom between the previous Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector and representatives from the community and philanthropic sectors held during the initial COVID-19 lockdown. There were no formal minutes recorded for these Zoom sessions. The A3 'Community Conversations by Zoom – with Minister Williams' is attached which provides a summary of these meetings and attendees.

It is important to note that these meetings were not early meetings of the Reference Group, which is yet to be established.

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 or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TJ Scott', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Tiffany Scott
Manager Branch Development and Support
Service Delivery and Operations