



21 May 2021

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Via email: [fyi-request-15028-
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Tēnā koe Daniel

Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request dated 31 March 2021 (OIA 20/21 0555)

Thank you for your OIA request dated 31 March 2021 to the Department of Internal Affairs (Department). You requested –

- *As per Digital Child Exploitation Filtering System Code of Practice - March 2013 section 4.3: "Meetings of the IRG will be held at least three times a year" and 4.6: "Reports to the IRG and minutes of meetings of the IRG shall be published on the Department's website."
I am requesting the minutes and briefing documents of all the 2020 and 2021 (if any) meetings of the Independent Reference Group. There are no minutes or briefing documents on the DIA website for 2020/2021.*
- *The 2019 meeting minutes (from [https://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/Files/DCEFS-IRG-Meeting-minutes-November-2019/\\$file/DCEFS-IRG-Meeting-minutes-November-2019.pdf](https://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/Files/DCEFS-IRG-Meeting-minutes-November-2019/$file/DCEFS-IRG-Meeting-minutes-November-2019.pdf)) state 4.5: "Caroline Neame noted that the filter list size (604 websites) remains the same – but there have been some changes made by variation. Filter list is overdue for audit check of list. "I am requesting all documents and communications relating to the audit check done on the filter list mentioned in section 4.5 of the November 2019 meeting minutes.*
- *I am also requesting the CAB paper and all documents/communications relating to the CAB paper mentioned in section 5.8 of the November 2019 meeting minutes.*

Response to your request

Part one

The Code of Practice requires the Independent Reference Group (IRG) to meet at least three times per year. The IRG only met once in 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19 and the need for an urgent replacement of the filter. A member of the IRG was involved in the five-month process to secure and implement a replacement filter service. The replacement filter was in place by 31 August 2020 and an IRG meeting was held on 4 November 2020.

The minutes of IRG meetings are now available on the Department website [here](#). The briefing documentation and the agenda for the November 2020 meeting are included with this letter as Documents 1 and 2.

The IRG have already met once in 2021, with the first meeting held on 22 April 2021. The minutes for this meeting have also been published on the Department's website (same link as above). A further two meetings are already scheduled for later in the year.

Part two

In the context of the minutes from the November 2019 meeting the term "audit check" relates to a full review of the URLs included on the Digital Child Exploitation Filter (DCEF) Block List. The audit check took place to review whether each URL on the list should remain on the list or should be removed.

Audit checks are carried out as regular operational work. The planning relating to the review mentioned in section 4.5 of the November 2019 meeting minutes was done verbally.

Additionally, within scope of this portion of your request is the spreadsheet used to track website URLs which are included on the Block List. This spreadsheet is withheld in full as it holds information which identifies blocked sites, plus links to those sites, in reliance on section 6(c) of the OIA.

For your information, we can inform you that as a result of this review 312 URLs were removed from the DCEF Block List and 277 URLs remained on the list.

Part three

The Cabinet paper you have requested as referenced in the November 2019 meeting minutes is publicly available on the Department's website [here](#). Also, within this link is documentation associated with the Cabinet paper. You were advised of this on 13 May 2021 and you confirmed on the 14 May 2021 that the remainder of part three (all documents and communications relating to the Cabinet paper) were no longer required.

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.

Ngā mihi



Jared Mullen
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