

24 June 2021

Micky Turner  
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OIA 27386

Tēnā koe Micky Turner

I refer to your Official Information Act (OIA) request that was transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade on 12 April 2021. You requested the following information:

*All documentation [the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade] has regarding a 'Taiwan & New Zealand Travel Bubble' from 1 April 2020 until now.*

*Please include all internal emails between Government Ministers, as well as emails to and from Taiwanese (& Chinese politicians, NZ mayors, NZ tourism operators, NZ media and NZ journalists.*

On 11 May 2021, we advised that an extension was required due to the need for further consultation and review. Thank you for your patience while this process was completed.

The Ministry has identified a number of documents that contain references that would fall within the scope of your request. However, this information is withheld in full under section 6(a) of the OIA to avoid prejudicing the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the New Zealand Government.

In an effort to meet the intent of your request, we have summarised the information in these documents below.

A number of jurisdictions, including Taiwan, have expressed interest in forming a travel bubble with New Zealand, or otherwise establishing schemes to facilitate the movement of people across borders. On each occasion, officials have responded to note that the New Zealand border plays a central role in preventing COVID-19 from entering the country, and New Zealand will continue to move cautiously and carefully on the removal of any border restrictions. Our focus has been on establishing quarantine-free travel initiatives with Australia, the Cook Islands and Niue.

The health of New Zealanders and our Pacific neighbours will continue to be our priority. Our goal is to progressively re-open our borders to the world where it is safe to do so and where we can maintain our strategy of keeping COVID-19 out of New Zealand. We recognise there are several other economies that would welcome a dialogue about possible quarantine-free travel arrangements. There is no timeline for those conversations at this stage, but we look forward to having them when the public health situation allows it.

Please note that we may publish this letter (with your personal details redacted) on the Ministry's website.

You have the right under section 28(3) of the OIA to seek a review of this response by the Ombudsman.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Julie-Anne Lee', with a horizontal line underneath.

Julie-Anne Lee  
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade