

15 June 2021

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Tēnā koe Cathy Odgers

I refer to your email of 16 April 2021 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

...What are the collective salaries of all MFAT staff working remotely from their overseas posts measured by each country during the period March 2020 to April 2021?

On 17 May 2021, the Ministry extended the deadline to provide a decision on your request to 15 June 2021. Thank you for your patience while this process has been completed.

During the period from March 2020 to April 2021, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) staff worked remotely from their overseas posts in a range of situations, being:

1. The post was in lockdown due to COVID-19-related government restrictions and therefore staff had to work remotely, in-country;
2. The post was in lockdown due to COVID-19 related government restrictions and staff therefore had to work remotely, in New Zealand;
3. The post was closed due to COVID-19 health and safety risks and therefore staff had to work remotely, from New Zealand;
4. The post operated split shifts to minimise health and safety and business continuity risks so that a portion of staff worked remotely, in-country for periods of time;
5. Staff returned to New Zealand on a leave break from post and worked remotely during the period of MIQ, both in New Zealand and, in some situations, on return to post;
6. Staff returned to New Zealand at the conclusion of their posting and worked remotely during the period of MIQ in New Zealand; and
7. Staff periodically worked remotely from the post, in an agreed flexible working arrangement with their manager.

We are able to provide approximate collective salary costs, by country, from March 2020 to April 2021 in those scenarios set out in 1), 2) and 3) above. These salary costs are for staff on a posting, and excludes salary costs for locally employed staff which not held centrally (refer to Annex A). Some information is being withheld from the information released under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA, to protect personal privacy.

However, you should be aware that these salary costs are approximate only as MFAT has not compiled detailed information about the actual start and end dates of each lockdown for each post during this period.

We are not able to provide approximate collective salary costs, by country, from March 2020 to April 2021 for the scenarios set out in 4), 5), 6) and 7) above; this is not information that MFAT has collected to this level of detail.

Where the information has been withheld under section 9 of the OIA, no public interest in releasing the information has been identified that would override the reasons for withholding it.

Please note that we may publish this letter (with your personal details redacted) and enclosed documents 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



Julie-Anne Lee
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Annex A - Salaries by Country of Staff Working Remotely

The following table sets out, by country, the approximate total salaries for staff on a posting who, during the period March 2020 to April 2021, worked remotely from their overseas post because:

1. The post was in lockdown due to COVID-19 related government restrictions and staff therefore had to work remotely, in country;
2. The post was in lockdown due to COVID-19 related government restrictions and staff therefore had to work remotely, in New Zealand; or
3. The post was closed due to COVID-19 health and safety risks and staff therefore had to work remotely from New Zealand.

Country	Total Salary
Austria	\$ 416,419.00
Belgium	\$ 1,001,917.00
Canada	\$ 591,126.00
Egypt	\$ 568,273.00
Ethiopia	\$ 581,301.00
Fiji	\$ 1,142,310.00
France	\$ 644,308.00
India	\$ 666,464.00
Iran, Islamic Republic of	\$ 643,253.00
Italy	\$ 509,618.00
Malaysia	\$ 447,408.00
Myanmar	\$ 399,859.00
Papua New Guinea	\$ 1,030,509.00
People's Republic of China	\$ 2,779,368.00
Philippines	\$ 375,310.00
Russian Federation	\$ 872,750.00
Saudi Arabia	\$ 510,669.00
Solomon Islands	\$ 611,182.00
South Africa	\$ 494,581.00
Switzerland	\$ 1,540,722.00
Timor-Leste	\$ 388,277.00
United Kingdom	\$ 1,570,255.00
United States	\$ 3,125,342.00
Vietnam	\$ 714,844.00