



18 May 2021

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dia.govt.nz

Dear Carl

OIA request 20/21 0594 Request for information relating to the issuance of New Zealand passports to overseas intelligence or security agencies

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received by the Department of Internal Affairs (Department) on 19 April 2021.

You requested –

- *Does the Department of Internal Affairs currently have a policy and process with regard to the issuing New Zealand passports to foreign (i.e. non-NZ) intelligence and/or security agencies to facilitate plausible cover or ease of travel?*
- *Has the Department of Internal Affairs previously issued NZ passports to foreign (i.e. non-NZ) intelligence and/or security agencies?*
- *Has the Department of Internal Affairs received requests for NZ passports from foreign (i.e. non-NZ) intelligence and/or security agencies that have not been fulfilled?*

In response to your request I can provide you with the following information.

I can confirm the Department has not issued any New Zealand passports to foreign intelligence or security agencies, nor has the Department received any requests to do so.

It may be helpful to explain that New Zealand passports can only be issued as authorised by the Passports Act 1992 (Act). There is no provision in the Act relating to the issuance of a New Zealand passport to a foreign national working for a security or intelligence agency.

New Zealand passports may only be issued to New Zealand citizens. The only cases where the Passport Office would issue a travel document to a non-citizen would be a Certificate of Identity (COI) or a Refugee Travel Document (RTD).

A COI and RTD are both travel documents that allow people who are not New Zealand citizens to leave New Zealand when they cannot obtain a passport from the country of which they hold citizenship. Issuance of these documents is covered under sections 16 and 27A of the Act.

The Department therefore does not have a policy or process relating to the issuing New Zealand passports to foreign intelligence or security agencies.

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 blue ink, appearing to read 'Julia Taylor', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Julia Taylor
Manager Operational Policy and Official Correspondence
Service Delivery and Operations