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23 June 2023

James

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Tēnā koe James

Your Official Information Act 1982 request, reference OIA 2223-0895

I am responding to your email of 25 May 2023 to Te Tari Taiwhenua | the Department of Internal Affairs requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

- 1. Please outline your process for combating TXT message scam with the free of charge 7726 service offered by DIA. At what point do you flag with telcos that DIA believes a cell phone number is being used to scam?*
- 2. Please provide the number of unique cellphone numbers that have been reported to the telcos because DIA suspects it is being used to spam since the start of March to now.*

Question one

Te Tari Taiwhenua's process for combating text message scams can be found on page 12 of the 2022 Digital Messaging Transparency Report (the Transparency Report), located at dia.govt.nz/Spam-Transparency-reports.

Image 6 within the Transparency Report shows the digital messaging harmful investigative process. The 7726 service is in the 'SMS reports system' in this eco-system.

Question two

Cellphone numbers that are reported by the public as possible sender of a spam message are sent directly as an automated report to the relevant telecommunications company. The report also includes the list of cellphone numbers of spam recipients.

The Transparency Report contains a section entitled *Our approach to keeping New Zealand safe*. This section explains that the telecommunication company decides what action to take. If it concludes that further investigation is required, then information is sent to Te Tari Taiwhenua.

Te Tari Taiwhenua does not decide if a unique number is being used for spam purposes and does not hold the information requested in part two of your request. Therefore, I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(g)(i) of the Act.

Access to the Ombudsman

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the Act, to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this response. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

We intend to publish our response to your request on www.dia.govt.nz. This letter, with your personal details removed, will be published in its entirety. Publishing responses increases the availability of information to the public and is consistent with the Act's purpose of enabling more effective participation in the making and administration of laws and policies and promoting the accountability of Ministers and officials.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anita Balakrishnan', written in a cursive style.

Anita Balakrishnan

Tumuaki | Director Ministerial, Monitoring and Capability