

13 February 2024

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OIA 29024

Tēnā koe Tim Herewini

I refer to your email of 15 January 2024 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

*All material to, from or within MFAT that touches on this matter of US recognition, including:*

- a. public statements,*
- b. correspondence,*
- c. advice from other government departments,*
- d. diplomatic channels through which the unique constitutional relationship has been articulated, and in particular documentation to establish when MFAT knew of the matter.*

On 5 February 2024 we contacted you to advise that as currently framed your request would capture a significant volume of information and it would likely be refused. On that basis, we sought to refine your request to be for:

1. Public statements made by MFAT on the issue of the United States recognition of Cook Islands and Niue in the period 1 February 2023 to 30 September 2023.
2. Correspondence to the US Embassy in New Zealand from MFAT on the issue of the United States recognition of Cook Islands and Niue and NZ's constitutional relationship with the Cook Islands and Niue in the period 1 February 2023 to 30 September 2023.
3. Advice received by MFAT from other New Zealand Government Agencies on the issue of the United States recognition of Cook Islands and Niue in the period 1 February 2023 to 30 September 2023.
4. The explanation of the constitutional relationship between New Zealand and Cook Islands and Niue provided to the US Embassy in New Zealand by MFAT.
5. Information that establishes the date on which MFAT was made aware of the United States intention to recognise Cook Islands and Niue.

We asked for your response by 12 February 2024, as we did not hear from you by this date, we have proceeded with the wording of your original request.

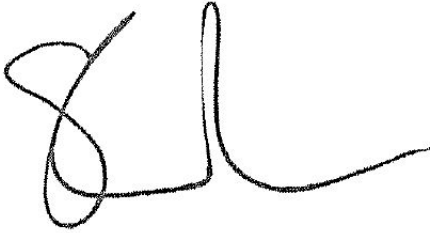
As noted above, the way your request is currently framed, it captures a significant volume of information. Therefore, your request is refused in full under section 18(f) of the OIA, as the information you requested cannot be made available without substantial collation and research.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Therefore, our response to your request (with your personal information

removed) may be published on the Ministry website: [www.mfat.govt.nz/en/about-us/contact-us/official-information-act-responses/](http://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/about-us/contact-us/official-information-act-responses/)

If you have any questions about this decision, you can contact us by email at: [DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz). You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision by contacting [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SC', written in a cursive style.

Sarah Corbett  
for Acting Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade