

Penelope Neuberger  
fyi-request-28137-755edbc0@requests.fyi.org.nz

19 September 2024

Dear Penelope

### **OIA 24-25-17: Overseas Trip for Health and Safety Manager**

Thank you for your email of 22 August 2024 to New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE), making a request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). You requested the following information:

*Can you please explain why the Health and Safety Manager went on a trip to South America recently? Whilst I understand the importance of ensuring employee wellbeing, I believe this trip was unnecessary and has raised several questions about the effective use of government resources.*

*Specifically, I would like the details on the following;*

- 1. What costs were incurred for the trip, including what type or class of travel did the Safety Manager take (Premium Economy, Business etc), accommodation and travel expenses.*
- 2. Why was this trip prioritised? This organisation has many international offices why was this one chosen and how many people received a health and safety "assessment" whilst the manager was there?*
- 3. Why wasn't an alternative method taken such as video conferencing or local representatives in the office taking the manager through the assessment? Could the same goals be achieved without the need for international travel?*
- 4. The itinerary/agenda for this trip.*
- 5. This trip was taken during a time of austerity within the New Zealand government and when a restructure was taking place within this organisation, why was this deemed so important to be completed? And why were other offices not given the same treatment?*

Answers to your questions are as follows

The health and safety of our people is a priority for NZTE. We undertook a review of our South American offices by our Director of Safety and Wellbeing to ensure we are delivering on this priority.

1. The total cost incurred for the 14-day review was \$6,744. The Director of Safety and Wellbeing travelled Economy Class.
2. Latin America presents a range of risks for NZTE employees. The reviews undertaken were of office and relevant sites, not based on specific people. NZTE has a number of safety and security protocols designed to keep people safe, the visits to the two offices below were to confirm that the controls NZTE has in place are sufficient. This was done in conjunction with a review of consular security updates and event safety management updates.

Santiago – Event activity requires good health and safety and risk management planning for the benefit of NZTE employees and customers. The Director of Safety and Wellbeing joined an event to oversee the health and safety planning prior to the event and supervised the implementation of an event emergency and crisis plan.

Sao Paulo – NZTE has determined that certain offices and locations be reviewed by someone outside of the office location to ensure effective security protocols were in place and being followed with regards to consular activities.

3. The reviews required someone who has an in-depth knowledge of the security settings required by NZTE. It also required the reviewer to be independent of the region to fully understand the local risk profile. The review required testing of systems and protocols that could not be conducted off site/ virtually.
4. Please refer to Appendix One for the itinerary of the review.
5. NZTE has offices and people in 37 locations internationally. Globally there is an increase of safety and security risks, in particular violence and aggression. NZTE is required to ensure that consular security at offices is appropriate and best practice. In certain locations this requires independent assessment and a higher level of scrutiny.

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

Yours sincerely



Melissa Trochon  
**Director – Board & Ministerial**

## Appendix One: Review Itinerary

Date	Activity
25 May 2024	Flight Wellington to Auckland Flight Auckland to Santiago
26 May 2024	Weekend
27 May 2024	Time Off in Lieu
28 May 2024	Santiago office work*
29 May 2024	Santiago office work
30 May 2024	Exponor Chile Trade Fair- Antofagasta
31 May 2024	Exponor Chile Trade Fair- Antofagasta
1 June 2024	Flight Santiago to Sao Paulo
2 June 2024	Weekend
3 June 2024	Sao Paulo office work
4 June 2024	Sao Paulo office work
5 June 2024	Flight Sao Paulo to Santiago
6 June 2024	Flight Santiago to Auckland
7 June 2024	Flight Auckland to Wellington

\*Office work across all locations included the following activities:

- New Regional Director and Regional Office Manager (ROM) training
  - ROM safety responsibilities
  - Crisis Management Plan
  - Health and Safety expectations
  - Inductions
- Office, equipment, security and process checks