

# Office of Hon Nicola Willis

Minister of Finance  
Minister for the Public Service  
Minister for Social Investment  
Associate Minister of Climate Change



29 OCT 2024

Nigle

[fyi-request-28495-a4a50d5c@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-28495-a4a50d5c@requests.fyi.org.nz)>

Dear Nigle

## Official Information Request Reference MOIA 2024-0262

I refer to your official information request dated 23 September 2024 for:

- 1. All correspondence from lobby groups, businesses, members of the public and other Ministers about public servants working from home.*
- 2. All documents (advice, briefings, emails, aide memoirs etc) provided to your office that were used to draft the directive to the public service commission regarding public servants being required to work in the office.*
- 3. All documents (advice, briefings, emails, aide memoirs etc) provided to your office that were used to draft your announcement regarding public servants being required to work in the office.*
- 4. All documents sent to other Ministers for consultation or as an FYI regarding your directive to the public service commission about public servants being required to work in the office.*
- 5. A list of meetings you have had that have contributed to your decision in issuing a directive to the public service commission regarding public servants being required to work in the office. This list should include the date of the meeting, who attended, where it took place and who requested the meeting.*
- 6. All evidence you have received in any form e.g. statistics, anecdotal, reports etc that show a loss in productivity or quality of work from when a public servant works from home vs when they work in the office.*
- 7. All correspondence between members of your staff regarding any work leading up to or in the wake of your announcement that public servants should work in the office rather than at home. This should include, but not be limited to, Teams, emails, WhatsApp, texts.*
- 8. For clarity, if any of the above is unclear each of my questions refers to your announcement made Monday 23rd September 2024 regarding public servants and working from home. If any of my questions are worded incorrectly please assume I am referring to any work that lead to this announcement.*

### Information to be withheld

Please find listed below the correspondence I have received from members of the public in regard to public servants working from home which is covered by your request that I have decided to withhold in full under section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) in order to protect the privacy of natural persons, including deceased people.

There are also documents within scope of part three of your request that I have decided to withhold in full under section 9(2)(g)(i) of the OIA to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation.

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the OIA.

Item	Date	Document Description	Decision
9	6 September 2024	Email from Member of the Public	Withheld in full
10	21 September 2024	Email from Member of the Public	Withheld in full

### Information publicly available

The following information is also covered by your request and is publicly available on Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission's (the Commission's) website at the link provided in the table below.

Item	Date	Document Description	Website Address
11	21 August 2024	REPORT - Hybrid working in the New Zealand Public Service	<a href="https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/publications">https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/publications</a>
12	17 September 2024	REPORT – Hybrid Working – Next Steps	<a href="https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/publications">https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/publications</a>

Accordingly, I have refused your request for the documents listed in the above table under section 18(d) of the OIA – the information requested is or will soon be publicly available. Some relevant information has been removed from documents listed in the above table and should continue to be withheld under the OIA, on the grounds described in the documents.

### Information being released

In regard to part five of your request, I discussed matters relating to hybrid working in the New Zealand Public Service with officials from the Commission at various meetings throughout the year, for example in discussions about the Government Workforce Policy Statement. These discussions did not have a specific agenda item on hybrid working. At meetings with the Commission held on the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 2024 hybrid working was an agenda item. Those who attended the meetings included the Acting Public Service Commissioner, the Deputy Public Service Commissioner and Deputy Chief Executives from the Commission, and my Senior Ministerial Advisor and Public Service Private Secretary.

### Information does not exist

I have regular free and frank conversations with my ministerial colleagues. I do not hold records of the dates of these conversations.

I am therefore refusing parts four, six and seven of your request under section 18(e) of the OIA on the grounds that the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact Misty Mossman at [Misty.Mossman@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Misty.Mossman@parliament.govt.nz).

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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Hon Nicola Willis  
**Minister for the Public Service**