



12 February 2025

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Dear Chris

**Official Information Act request (2425-0666)**

Thank you for your request for information dated 23 December 2024 made under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Your request was partially transferred to the Department of Internal Affairs (the Department) on 16 January 2025. The parts of your request transferred to the Department are as follows:

- 2) *Can you please provide documentation that describes the requirements, policy and process of archiving or retaining documentation/Records generated by the "previous" Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in the following scenarios:*
  - 2a) *A change in the party leader of the governing party (so the Prime Minister changes);*
  - 2b) *A change in the person holding the role of Prime Minister within a coalition government to the leader of another party where the parties in the governing coalition do not change;*
  - 2c) *No change of Prime Minister but a new term as a result of an election where the governing party retains power with the same leader*
  - 2d) *A change in Prime Minister as a result of another party or Coalition winning the election - the case in point for the OIA that forms the basis of this enquiry.*
- 3) *Can you confirm via documentation or otherwise that at some point the Records of the following entities are eventually sent to the National Archives of New Zealand (and if there is any moratorium set on the time that must pass until they can be accessed by the public)?*
  - 3a) *PMO*

## Background

Ministers (including the Prime Minister) and Associate Ministers of the Crown (Ministers) are considered to be 'public offices' as defined in section 4 of the Public Records Act 2005. As such, they are required to create and maintain records pertaining to their role as a Minister/Prime Minister and for any portfolios they hold.

For ease, this response will use 'Ministers' as a blanket term from this point onwards. The content of this response and the documents in **Appendix A** are applicable to all Ministers, Associate Ministers, and the Prime Minister. Additionally, the advice and process outlined in documents provided in **Appendix A** is relevant to all scenarios listed in your request with the exception of 2c). A Prime Minister remaining in office will only need to consider a handover process if there is a change to the portfolios they hold.

Ministerial Services, within the Department, is responsible for ensuring a range of support services are available to Ministers and their staff including information management (IM). The Department provides advice to Ministers and their staff about what constitutes public records and what their responsibilities are in terms of managing public records in accordance with the Public Records Act 2005, the Official Information Act 1982, and the Privacy Act 2020.

Ministerial Services assist Ministers and their staff to discharge these responsibilities by providing:

- Information Management systems for storing and managing records
- Advice and guidance on retention and disposal of records; and
- Services relating to the eventual transfer of records to Archives NZ of both paper and electronic records.

While the Department provides record keeping advice to Ministers and their staff, decisions about what information is kept and stored remains the responsibility of the individual Minister with support for their office.

## Response to your request

### *Part 2) of your request*

Please find attached **Appendix A** which contains two documents titled '*Core public recordkeeping responsibilities for Ministers*' and '*2025 Reshuffle Advice: Getting your Minister's information ready for transition*'.

These documents provide general guidance to Ministers and their staff regarding information management. This guidance also outlines the requirements and processes for Ministers and staff when considering, identifying, filing, transferring, and disposing of Ministerial information. This information is provided at the time a Ministerial Office is first established, and in the case of the second document, this was specifically shared with Senior Private Secretaries after changes in Ministerial warrants were announced/prior to implementation. These documents are also available to staff at any time on an internal website.

In addition to the documents contained in **Appendix A**, the Department also provides guidance and training to Senior Private Secretaries to support Ministers to manage information in order to meet their obligations under the Public Records Act. On occasion, the Department is able to provide additional support, for example when a Minister leaves office, to ensure records are appropriately stored and saved.

When a Minister/Prime Minister takes office, they are provided with a new (empty) information management site (called Pūkete) used as a repository for storing electronic information. Additional Pūkete sites are created for any portfolios they personally hold. In all the scenarios listed in part 2) of your request, it is the decision of the previous Minister/Prime Minister on what records are shared with their successor.

*Part 3) of your request*

Minister's records are governed by Disposal Authority 719<sup>1</sup>. This sets out the minimum retention periods (typically 5 years from closure of the term of government) where the Department holds the records on behalf of the Minister prior to any disposal or transfer activity. During this time, records remain subject to the Official Information Act in consultation with the former Minister/Prime Minister.

At the conclusion of the retention period, the Department will assist the former Minister/Prime Minister to appraise any records in accordance with the disposal schedule and facilitate any transfers to Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga - Archives NZ. At the time of transfer to Archives NZ, the former Minister can set out any access provisions which will govern when the information may or may not become publicly accessible.

We may publish this OIA response on [www.dia.govt.nz](http://www.dia.govt.nz) (with your personal details having been removed). Publishing responses to OIA requests increases the availability of information to the public and is consistent with the purpose of the Act to enable effective participation in the making and administration of laws and policies, and to promote the accountability of Ministers and officials.

If you have any concerns with the information in this response, you have a right to request an investigation and review by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Act. Information on how to do this is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



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Acting General Manager – Ministerial Services  
Te Haumi – Enterprise Partnerships  
Te Tari Taiwhenua – The Department of Internal Affairs

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<sup>1</sup> <https://collections.archives.govt.nz/en/web/arena/search#/entity/aims-archive/DA719/da719?q=DA+719&source=aims-archive>

# Core public recordkeeping responsibilities for Ministers

Ministers and Associate Ministers of the Crown (Ministers) are public offices as defined in section 4 of the Public Records Act 2005 (the Act). Any information that is created or received by a public office in the conduct of its affairs is a public record as defined in the same section of the Act. As a Minister, you are ultimately responsible for meeting the requirements of the Act for the management of your public records. Creating, maintaining and disposing of your records will, however, depend on the support of staff in your office.

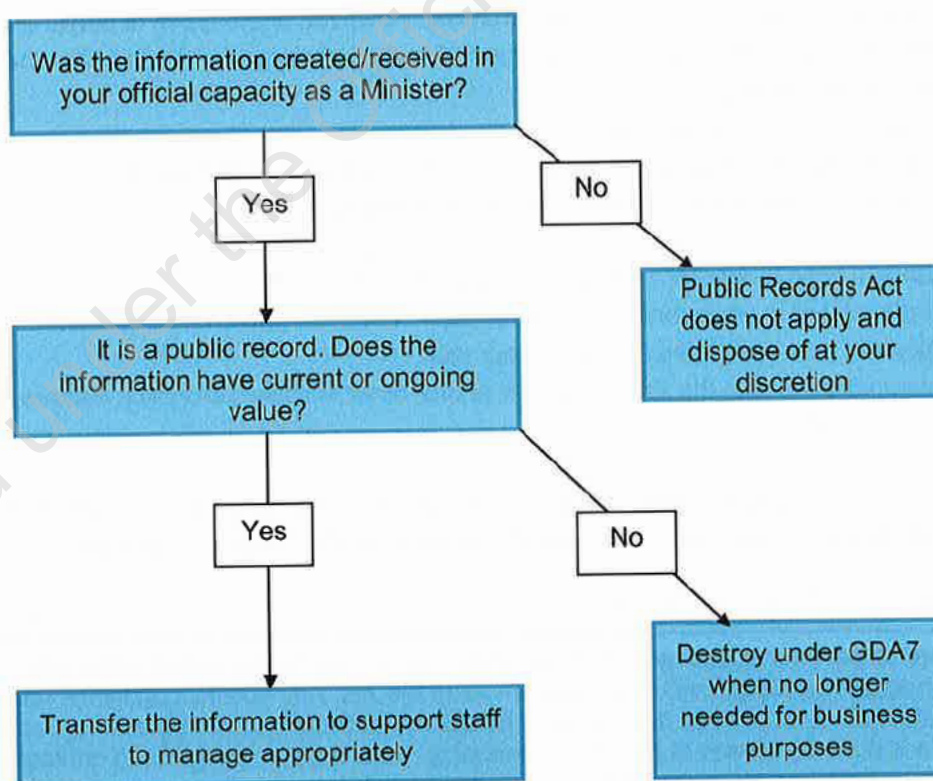
This quick guide assists you to comply with your core obligations to **create and maintain** full and accurate public records (section 17 of the Act), and **dispose** of those records legally and appropriately (section 18).<sup>1</sup>

Please also see the quick guide on **Text messages: advice for Ministers**.

## Which records are public records?

Records in any format created or received in a Minister's official capacity, that is, in the conduct of ministerial affairs, are public records under the Act. For help in identifying what is and what is not a public record, use the decision tree below.

### Decision tree for identifying public records



<sup>1</sup> For an explanation of any recordkeeping terms, please see Archives New Zealand's *Glossary*

<http://www.records.archives.govt.nz/resources-and-guides/>

Non-public records are records relating to:

- constituency or party political matters (such as the management of electorate offices, constituent or party officials correspondence, party organization, party-political material including party manifestos and advertising, election material and campaigns, caucus affairs and appointments to party roles)
- your role as a member of Parliament
- matters relating to your private life and personal, business or professional interests and associations (such as personal diaries or correspondence)

The requirements of the Act **do not apply** to this category of records and their disposal is at your discretion.

## What are your core obligations?

### 1. Create and maintain

Records should be created routinely as part of your ministerial work. Some records may automatically be created, such as when sending or receiving an email. In other cases, where the activity does not naturally result in a record, you or your staff will need to create one. Examples of information which should be captured as a public record include:

- your decision on a departmental briefing paper
- decisions made in a meeting with your advisors about a significant change to policy

Many of the records you work with will be managed by others, for example, Cabinet Office manages Cabinet records and your portfolio public offices manage the records of their work with you as their Minister.

### 2. Disposal of public records

In general, your public records cannot be disposed of, i.e. destroyed, deposited or transferred to Archives New Zealand, without the authority of the Chief Archivist. However, some types of public records have only transitory, facilitative and/or short-term value and are already authorised for destruction when they are no longer required.<sup>2</sup> For example:

- draft or incomplete documents
- casual or instantaneous communications such as emails and text messages that contain information of an ephemeral, non-transactional nature

Other public records have longer-term value and must be retained. For example:

- records related to your portfolio that originated in another public office and were subsequently responded to or annotated by you or your staff
- communications with the Prime Minister and/or other Ministers on policy matters directly relating to your portfolio

Your support staff will be able to advise you on which types of public records you create that have longer-term value and which do not, and can provide practical guidance on what to do in both cases.

### 3. Deposit of public records

When you leave office, your public records of long-term value may be deposited in the care of the Chief Archivist (or an approved repository) under section 42 of the Act. Any special conditions relating to access to any of the public records which you deposit must be agreed between you and the Chief Archivist at the time of deposit. This is done by means of an Access Authority. Your support staff should contact the Ministerial Resourcing Team to liaise with Archives New Zealand about this.

<sup>2</sup> Archives New Zealand's *General Disposal Authority for Facilitative, Transitory and/or Short-term Value Records (GDA 7)*

<http://www.records.archives.govt.nz/resources-and-guides/general-disposal-authority-7/>




# 2025 Reshuffle Advice:

## Getting your Minister's information ready for transition

A guide for Senior Private Secretaries

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## SECTION 1 - Introduction

Ministers' information needs to be appropriately managed at all times in the lead up to, and following, the General Election and during transitions between offices.

As a Senior Private Secretary (SPS) you will need to determine what information can be deleted or destroyed, and what needs to be kept and stored. Your Minister will need to be involved in some of these decisions.

This guide will help you to support your Minister to meet their obligations under the Public Records Act 2005 (PRA), Privacy Act 2020 and Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) and outlines the steps you will need to follow. Additional guidance is available if you need it - please contact your Portfolio Manager in the first instance.

Your goal is to have your Minister's information in a ready state at all times, so that you and your Minister are well prepared for any transition period. Please note *information* and *records* are used interchangeably in this guide. The guide also refers to *Destroy*. Destroy covers both the *destruction* of physical information and the *deletion* of digital information.

### What you need to consider

Ministers have multiple roles. In addition to being part of the Executive, they are also a Member of Parliament, party member and private citizen.

Information your Minister (and their office) receives or creates in their Ministerial capacity is covered by the PRA, Privacy Act and OIA. There are specific requirements that need to be met. Your Minister is personally responsible for meeting these obligations.

Information your Minister receives in their capacity as a Member of Parliament, party member or private citizen is not subject to the PRA or OIA. The Minister can decide what happens to this information. Where this information contains personal information about others, the Minister is still subject to the Privacy Act.

### What the Public Records Act requires

The PRA defines a public record as 'any information that is created or received by a public office in the conduct of its affairs'. The Act requires that Ministers:

- Create full and accurate records in accordance with normal, prudent business practice, and organise and maintain them in accessible form for as long as they are required; and
- Dispose of these records legally and appropriately when no longer required. The disposal of records must be authorised by the Chief Archivist via a Disposal Authority, and usually entails either destruction or transfer to Archives New Zealand.



*Note:*

Disposal authorities are approved by the Chief Archivist. There are different disposal authorities covering different classes (categories) of information. The tables within Section 2 below will act as a guide and are based on the Ministers' Disposal Authority (DA719) as well as the applicable General Disposal Authorities that apply to all public records. If you require detailed guidance, Information Management staff are available to assist you, please talk to your Portfolio Manager in the first instance.

## What you need to do

1. **Consider** what information is held by you and your staff and where the information currently resides.
2. **Identify**, in consultation with your Minister, what action needs to be taken with that information in accordance with the instructions provided, e.g., destroy, store, transfer to a new Minister or return to the originating agency.
3. **File** the information based on the instructions provided, i.e., ensure all content relevant to the portfolio and the Minister's role are stored into the correct Pūkete site/library. Ensure staff who may have content in their One Drive or desktop locations have filed this content appropriately
4. **Box-up** physical (paper) information which needs to be stored. Include a contents list created using the supplied template – see Appendix B.
5. **Destroy** information which does not need to be kept (note this is quite a small subset of the information and if in doubt consult with the DIA Information Management staff.

## SECTION 2 – Action plan

### Step 1: Initial preparations – consider and identify

Identify all the information held in your office, including on people's work phones, on One Drive, in email accounts, social media and messaging apps, or stored in cabinets and cupboards etc.

Ask staff in your office to tidy up their personal drives (OneDrive) and email accounts in preparation for the next step:

- Delete any duplicated information (including print outs of digital information).
- Move any portfolio or other official information stored in other locations to the appropriate folder in Pūkete.

- Using the two “Information to keep” tables below as a guide, make file notes of any significant information that needs to be recorded from text messages, social media, voicemails etc., and save them in Pūkete as screen shots with appropriate descriptive titles.

## Step 2: Categorise and move

Given time constraints, Step 2 can happen in parallel with Step 1.

Information now needs to be reviewed to determine whether it must be kept or whether it can be destroyed. Your Minister needs to be involved in this review as ultimately, they are responsible for managing their information within the obligations of the PRA, OIA and Privacy Acts.

What information needs to be kept and for how long, and what information can be destroyed, is set out in disposal authorities.

The tables below are based on the current General Disposal Authorities that apply to all public records as well as a the Disposal Authority for Ministers’ (DA719). **The Disposal Schedule (Appendix C) provides further description and exclusions for each category.**

### TABLE 1: INFORMATION TO KEEP FOR SUBSEQUENT TRANSFER TO ARCHIVES NEW ZEALAND

The Minister is legally required to keep this information, which will be transferred to Archives New Zealand after a minimum retention period (usually 5 years after they leave office).

Category of information
Changes in portfolio responsibilities and other official assignments
Policy and legislation
Legislative responsibilities (appointments and appeals)
Significant Ministerial/portfolio correspondence
Most Prime Minister’s correspondence
Ministerial advisory committees
Significant briefing notes or papers
Speeches and addresses <sup>1</sup>
Media and publicity <sup>2</sup>
Official visits, meetings, functions and ceremonies

<sup>1</sup> Any information that is in the public realm, e.g., on the Beehive website, does not need to be kept by the office.

<sup>2</sup> See point 2 above.

Category of information
Significantly annotated copies of Cabinet and Cabinet Committee papers <sup>3</sup>
Significantly annotated copies of public office or departmental records <sup>4</sup>

## TABLE 2: INFORMATION TO MARK FOR FUTURE DELETION

The Minister is legally required to keep this information for a minimum retention period, after which it can be destroyed.

Category of information
Routine ministerial/portfolio correspondence
Office diaries
Financial records
Official Information Act Requests

### *For digital information*

1. Information which has been filed into Pūkete will be managed under the relevant Disposal Authorities by DIA Information Management (in consultation with the Minister) and you do not need to sort or delete any of this content
2. Any work-related material stored in personal drives should be filed into Pūkete

### *For physical (paper) information*

1. Set up clearly labelled files/folders using the categories above.
2. In some cases, there may only be a small amount of content under some of these categories. This information should still be placed within its own clearly labelled folder or file.
3. Any papers provided to the Minister by an agency should be returned to the originating agency. Some agencies have particular handling requirements for classified material and you should consult with that agency if you are unsure.

<sup>3</sup> The Cabinet Office provides Archives New Zealand with an official set of Cabinet records. Ministers' offices only need to keep any Cabinet and Cabinet Committee papers which have been significantly annotated.

<sup>4</sup> Public office/departmental records are disposed of under their own disposal authorities. Ministers' offices only need to keep any of these records if they have been significantly annotated.

**TABLE 3: INFORMATION TO DESTROY**

This information can legally be destroyed (or returned to an agency if applicable) when it is no longer required for administrative purposes.

Category of information
Speeches and addresses (drafts, preliminary, incomplete)
Media and publicity (drafts, preliminary, incomplete)
Routine briefing notes or papers
Routine media and publicity
Routine visits, meetings, functions and ceremonies
Invitations (accepted and declined)
Newspaper and other media materials relating to a Minister's portfolio
Published reports and papers
Reference material
Copies of Cabinet and Cabinet Committee papers <sup>5</sup>
Copies of public office or departmental records
Copies of Select Committee papers
Print outs and copies of digital information (unless significantly annotated)
Letters from constituents that don't relate to a Minister's portfolio or impact on government or portfolio decisions, e.g., sent to a Minister in their role as MP
Party information
Minister's private (personal) information

For information described in Table 3 that can be destroyed, it is up to you (and potentially your Minister) to decide when you want to destroy it. This would generally be when it is no longer need for administrative purposes. (Information being destroyed needs to be listed on a destruction register in most cases.).

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** f the content is already filed in Pūkete no disposal action is required as it will be managed by the Information Management team.

<sup>5</sup> Copies of Cabinet papers without significant annotations should only be returned to the Cabinet Office If the office does not have an approved shredder and needs assistance with the destruction of documents above Restricted.

### Step 3: List physical information

Once you have finished categorising the information, any physical (paper) files need to be listed and boxed so they are ready to move to storage.

It's important this information is listed correctly as this will make it easier in the future to identify the contents of each box, particularly if information is needed to answer an OIA request.

Using the supplied spreadsheet (Appendix B) include the following for each file/folder:

Item	Description
Minister's name	Add Minister's name
Box number	Number of the box (refer point 4, step 4)
Portfolio	Add where applicable. If information covering multiple portfolios is included in the file, list all relevant portfolios
Description	Brief description of the type of information contained in the file, including the 'Keep' or 'Marked for destruction' tag
Identifier	Any classification number/code used within your office, to identify the type of information contained in the file
Part Number	Part numbers can be used to distinguish related files
File open date	Year of the oldest item in the file (i.e., the year the item was created)
File close date	Year of the most recent item in the file (i.e., the year the item was created)

### Step 4: Box physical information

Physical information that has been categorised and listed need to be placed in boxes:

1. Order boxes from DIA for storage (contact Ministerial Resourcing for these).
2. Place the files/folder in the box in the same order as the listing spreadsheet.
3. Files/folders should fit comfortably so they can be easily removed if access is required.
4. Write the Minister's name and a number on the lid of each box, labelling them Box 1 of xx, 2 of xx, 3 of xx etc and add this number to the listing spreadsheet.
5. Secure a copy of the listing schedule inside the box to the underside of the lid, to be able to read the list easily if access to the box is required.
6. Send a digital copy of the listing spreadsheet to the Ministerial Resourcing team.

Please note these boxes will go into storage. Information and records described in Table 1 will later be transferred to Archives New Zealand. If your Minister thinks that particular access restrictions are appropriate for groups of this information, please consult with Information Management staff about this aspect.

Information described in Table 2 will be stored until they have reached their minimum retention period, after which they will be destroyed.

## Step 5: Destroy information

When disposing of physical information that can be destroyed immediately (e.g. print outs and copies):

- For information classified SENSITIVE or RESTRICTED, or above, use the NZSIS approved shredder (grade 3) in your office.
- Information classified as UNCLASSIFIED or IN-CONFIDENCE, should be disposed of in the secure bin in your office.

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

# Appendix A – Frequently Asked Questions

## Why does it matter?

Information from Ministers' offices forms part of the public record, as well as capturing a Minister's legacy and their part in the history of New Zealand. This information tells us what, where, when and why business activities occurred. It shows the context of decisions and under what authority they were made, and provides evidence of Government and public office business activity.

The PRA requires Ministers, in simple terms, to keep a record of their advice, actions and decisions. It doesn't matter how this information has been communicated, e.g., by text, email, social media, paper etc., the important thing is that the information needs to be captured and managed appropriately.

## What happens to the information once a Minister moves on?

Ministers have discretion over what information is passed to their successor. They may choose to make some, or all, of this information available. Ministerial Services will generally facilitate any information transfer.

In the case of a change in Government following an election, information created or received by the previous Government may be made available to the Government of the day but only at the Ministers' discretion.

## What happens to the Pūkete sites and folders the Minister and their office staff have been using?

As a general rule:

- Ministerial staff will lose access to the Minister's Pūkete site and Ministerial Outlook folders when they no longer work for that Minister, or when a Minister of former Minister departs Parliament, or when their Minister is no longer a Minister.
- Ministers will retain access to their personal H drive, their Pūkete site and their Ministerial Outlook folders until such time as they leave Parliament.
- Ministers and their staff will continue to have access to their own personal drive for as long as they are in Parliament.

**The outgoing Minister can approve a copy of Portfolio related information to be passed to their successor. They retain the original information.**

## How long does a Minister's information need to be kept? What is a disposal authority?

This is determined by a set of rules set out in a disposal authority, which is issued by the Chief Archivist. A disposal authority lists the different categories of information which Ministers are likely to create or receive in their role, how long this information needs to be kept for, and what happens to it after a specified period.

For information that can be destroyed, each office can decide how long it needs to be kept. Offices should consider factors such as their Minister's preferences and how likely it is that the information will need to be referred to again. The ministerial information that needs to be retained will initially be stored for at least five years, then may be deposited with Archives New Zealand.

Any special conditions relating to public access to these records must be agreed at time of deposit. This is done by means of an access authority and will be facilitated by Ministerial Services and Archives New Zealand.

The Disposal Schedule for Ministers, Associate Ministers and Parliamentary Under-Secretaries - physical and digital records (DA 719) governs all Ministerial records

See also Archives New Zealand advice on General Disposal Authorities: [General disposal authorities – Archives New Zealand](#)



# Appendix B – Ministerial Records Listing Schedule Template



Ministerial Records  
Listing Schedule Tem

Appendix C –

**Disposal Schedule for Ministers, Associate Ministers and Parliamentary Under-Secretaries - physical and digital records**



DA719 Disposal  
Schedule.pdf

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