



23 December 2024

Ref: DOIA-REQ-0007109

John

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Tēnā koe John

Thank you for your request of 2 December 2024 to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

*I would like all the documents held by MBIE that was referred to in this article: [Minister told hybrid working, job cuts were affecting Crown leases | The Post](#)*

I believe this article was based on information supplied in a response under the Official Information Act. Therefore, I have decided to release this same information to you, subject to some information being withheld under the following sections of the Act:

- 9(2)(a) to protect the privacy of natural persons;
- 9(2)(b)(ii) to protect information where the making available of the information would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information;
- 9(2)(f)(iv) to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials; and,
- 9(2)(g)(i) 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 or officers and employees of any public service agency or organisation in the course of their duty.

I do not consider that the withholding of this information is outweighed by public interest considerations in making the information available.

In addition to the official information released, the author of this article sent a media query to MBIE. I have therefore also decided to provide the relevant detail from this media query and response below. Including a statement made by Parliamentary Services, which MBIE holds. As set out below:

#### **Media query of 13 November 2024**

*"I have some questions about the Wellington consolidation project, as well as occupancy of Bowen House and 61 Molesworth St.*

- 1. When did the Wellington consolidation project begin and what was the impetus for this - was this a directive from the public service minister, or was this an independent MBIE project.*
- 2. Was this driven by staff cuts in the public sector?*
- 3. When did the project begin?*

4. I understand Government departments and Crown agents occupy about 70 sites around Wellington CBD - how many did MBIE deem were being under utilised/ how many were at capacity/under capacity?

#### **61 Molesworth St**

5. Can you please provide an update on how many floors at 61 Molesworth St are currently utilised by Government agencies, departments or ministries, and how many are surplus to requirement and are actively being either sub leased, or are currently subleased.

6. Can you clarify what ongoing work there is to sublease the floors.

#### **Bowen House**

7. According to a briefing from MBIE to Minister Nicola Willis, the Bowen House Project was having trouble confirming occupants for the building due to staff cuts and flexible working arrangements. Since August, what work has gone on to confirm occupants for the building and what progress has been made. How many agencies have agreed to sign on?

8. Can you confirm what construction work is still ongoing at Bowen House and when the building will be ready for tenants.

9. Can you confirm Parliamentary Service has reengaged in discussions about possibly occupying Bowen House?

Are you please able to come back to me tomorrow at midday”

#### **Response to media query**

“Your question about how many floors are being leased in Bowen House is a little tricky to answer directly because Bowen House is not allocated to occupying agencies on a floor-by-floor basis, but rather has been configured as a shared workspace for multiple agencies with a mix of working floors (primarily workstations) and amenity floors (meeting rooms etc) for use by occupants and the wider public service.

In regards to your earlier questions, please see responses below that can be attributed to Liz Palmer, General Manager, Government Property Group.

Thanks again

Katie

#### **Wellington Consolidation**

The Government Property Group (GPG) within MBIE has been considering opportunities for efficiencies within the Wellington portfolio since late last year. This analysis is an enduring part of GPG's role and is a continuation of previous consolidation projects undertaken across Wellington. The identification of opportunities within the office portfolio is an ongoing role of GPG and is not in response to a ministerial directive or to recent changes in staffing numbers. This work became a formal project following approval of funding within Budget 2024. The analysis is presently at a portfolio level and the assessments of the suitability of buildings within the portfolio are not utilisation based.

### **61 Molesworth St**

*MFAT has advised that it will occupy seven of the eleven floors at 61 Molesworth Street for its Wellington-based staff. MFAT is working with MBIE's Government Property Group to explore options for other tenants. For further information on this building, please contact MFAT directly.*

### **Bowen House**

*GPG is actively engaging on a regular basis with a number of agencies who are planning to move into Bowen House in early 2025. We are also working with a number of other agencies who are looking to move to the building once their current leases expire. As these are active negotiations, we cannot confirm individual agencies at this time.*

*Bowen House has already undergone significant seismic strengthening and has 20 weeks remaining of the internal fitout. The project is on track for the building to be completed on 1 April 2025 with the first agencies moving into the building from April/May 2025.*

*GPG has a strong relationship with the Parliamentary Service and have ongoing conversations regarding their possible occupation of Bowen House. At this stage the Parliamentary Service have confirmed they will not require space in the building when it opens."*

### **Statement by Parliamentary Services**

*Parliamentary Service can confirm we are not reoccupying Bowen House. We have a Future Accommodation Strategy focusing on the new buildings at the back of Parliament to house MPs and staff. These additions will ensure our parliamentary precinct reflects Aotearoa New Zealand's culture and history, keep those on it safe and support a climate-friendly Parliament. More information on the strategy can be found here: [Parliament's Future Accommodation Strategy - New Zealand Parliament](#).*

While MBIE is aware of the statement produced by Parliamentary Services, we note this response reflects information MBIE holds, and believes informed the article.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request or this response, or if you require any further assistance, please contact [OIA@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:OIA@mbie.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.

Nāku noa, nā



Liz Palmer  
**Acting General Manager**  
Government Property Group

## Document Schedule

Date	Document title	Tracking number	Withholding sections used
20 August 2024	Oral Item Optimisation of Office Accommodation	2425-0769	9(2)(a), 9(2)(b)(ii), 9(2)(f)(iv)
30 August 2024	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade – New Premises	2425-0992	9(2)(a), 9(2)(b)(ii)
5 September 2024	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade – New Premises – Additional Information	2425-1048	9(2)(a), 9(2)(f)(iv)
6 August 2024	Title withheld under 9(2)(f)(iv)	2425-0594	9(2)(a), 9(2)(b)(ii), 9(2)(f)(iv), 9(2)(g)(i)