



Office of Hon Gerry Brownlee

MP for Ilam

Minister for Canterbury Earthquake
Recovery

Minister of Defence

Leader of the House

Minister Responsible for the Earthquake
Commission

Jackson Wood

fyi-request-3184-62384f73@requests.fyi.org.nz

02 NOV 2015

Dear Mr Wood

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request, received on 30 September 2015. You requested the following:

"... any and all documents, correspondence, advice, or information you, or your office, has received on or about Pandas or obtaining a Panda since 1 January 2010.

Specifically, could you please provide me with:

- any correspondence with the Wellington Zoo or Wellington City Council or Wellington City Councillors regarding pandas

- the reported proposal from the Wellington Zoo".

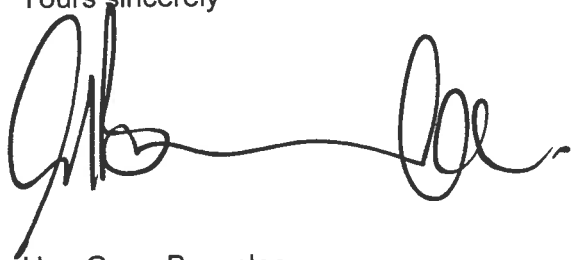
Information being released

I have decided to release the relevant parts of the documents listed below in relation to your request, subject to information being withheld as noted:

Item	Date	Document Description	Withholding grounds
1.	24-09-15	Emails to Wellington City Council regarding the Giant Panda proposal	
2.	24-09-15	Emails to Wellington City Council and Wellington Zoo regarding the Giant Panda proposal	
3.	24-09-15	Emails to Wellington City Council regarding the Giant Panda proposal	
4.	25-09-15	Email from Wellington City Council regarding the Giant Panda proposal	
5.	25-09-15	Email from Wellington City Council regarding the Giant Panda proposal	
6.	20-10-15	Emails to Wellington City Council regarding the Giant Panda proposal	

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the OIA.

Yours sincerely

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

Hon Gerry Brownlee
Minister of Defence

Nick Bryant

From: Justin Lester <Justin.Lester@wcc.govt.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 24 September 2015 1:55 p.m.
To: Nick Bryant
Cc: Celia Wade-Brown; Karen Fifield
Subject: RE: Visit to Giant Panda breeding centre, Chengdu

Hi Nick

Thank you very much for the phone call and I appreciate you making me aware of your trip next week.

I will compile a letter from the Mayor's Office, background information on Wellington Zoo and a list of questions we would like to ask the Giant Panda breeding centre and seek their response.

When do you leave and what is the deadline for me to get this information to you?

Thanks

Justin

Justin Lester

Deputy Mayor | Wellington City Council
P 04 801 3113 | M 021 247 8312 | F
E Justin.Lester@wcc.govt.nz | W Wellington.govt.nz | 



From: Nick Bryant [<mailto:Nick.Bryant@parliament.govt.nz>]
Sent: Thursday, 24 September 2015 9:06 a.m.
To: Justin Lester
Subject: Visit to Giant Panda breeding centre, Chengdu

Hi Justin,

As discussed, I'll be in Chengdu with the Defence Minister next week and we're visiting the Giant Panda breeding centre. Happy to help make Wellington's case in any way. If you can send some information for us to hand over to our hosts we'd be happy to do that.

Thanks,

Nick

Nick Bryant | Senior Press Secretary
Office of Hon Gerry Brownlee
MP for Ilam
Leader of the House
Minister of Defence

Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery
Minister Responsible for the Earthquake Commission
L7.4 The Beehive | Wellington | New Zealand
DDI: +64 4 817 8273 | Cell: +64 21 245 8272
nick.bryant@parliament.govt.nz

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Nick Bryant

From: Karen Fifield <Karen.Fifield@wellingtonzoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, 24 September 2015 2:17 p.m.
To: Nick Bryant; Justin Lester
Cc: Celia Wade-Brown; Mat Williams
Subject: RE: Visit to Giant Panda breeding centre, Chengdu

Hi Nick and Justin – I will draft a summary about Wellington Zoo for you.

Cheers and thanks,
K

Karen Fifield

Chief Executive | Zoo Administration | Wellington Zoo Trust
200 Daniell Street | Newtown | Wellington 6021
Ph 04 381 6752 | Mob 021 227 8129 | Fax 04 803 0777
E Karen.Fifield@wellingtonzoo.com | W www.wellingtonzoo.com | 

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From: Nick Bryant [<mailto:Nick.Bryant@parliament.govt.nz>]
Sent: Thursday, 24 September 2015 2:10 p.m.
To: Justin Lester
Cc: Celia Wade-Brown; Karen Fifield; Mat Williams
Subject: RE: Visit to Giant Panda breeding centre, Chengdu

Hi Justin,

We fly on Saturday. If you could email it by about 2pm tomorrow my colleague Mat Williams, who is also travelling with us, will print it and bring it along. I will be in Christchurch tomorrow.

Thank you,

Nick

From: Justin Lester [<mailto:Justin.Lester@wcc.govt.nz>]
Sent: Thursday, 24 September 2015 1:55 p.m.
To: Nick Bryant
Cc: Celia Wade-Brown; Karen Fifield
Subject: RE: Visit to Giant Panda breeding centre, Chengdu

Hi Nick

Thank you very much for the phone call and I appreciate you making me aware of your trip next week.

I will compile a letter from the Mayor's Office, background information on Wellington Zoo and a list of questions we would like to ask the Giant Panda breeding centre and seek their response.

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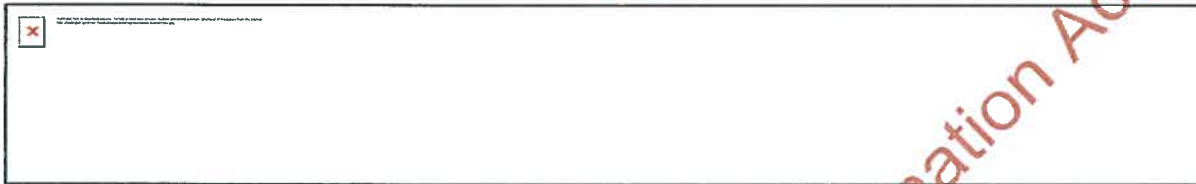
Justin

Justin Lester

Deputy Mayor | Wellington City Council

P 04 801 3113 | M 021 247 8312 | F

E Justin.Lester@wcc.govt.nz | W Wellington.govt.nz | 



From: Nick Bryant [<mailto:Nick.Bryant@parliament.govt.nz>]

Sent: Thursday, 24 September 2015 9:06 a.m.

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Thanks,

Nick

Nick Bryant | Senior Press Secretary
Office of Hon Gerry Brownlee
MP for Ilam
Leader of the House
Minister of Defence
Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery
Minister Responsible for the Earthquake Commission
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DDI: +64 4 817 8273 | Cell: +64 21 245 8272
nick.bryant@parliament.govt.nz

Nick Bryant

From: Justin Lester <Justin.Lester@wcc.govt.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 24 September 2015 4:04 p.m.
To: Nick Bryant
Cc: Celia Wade-Brown; Karen Fifield; Mat Williams
Subject: Re: Visit to Giant Panda breeding centre, Chengdu

Thanks Nick, will do.

Regards

Justin

Justin Lester
 Deputy Mayor
 Wellington City Council

On 24/09/2015, at 2:09 pm, Nick Bryant
 <Nick.Bryant@parliament.govt.nz<<mailto:Nick.Bryant@parliament.govt.nz>>> wrote:

Hi Justin,

We fly on Saturday. If you could email it by about 2pm tomorrow my colleague Mat Williams, who is also travelling with us, will print it and bring it along. I will be in Christchurch tomorrow.

Thank you,

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 Sent: Thursday, 24 September 2015 1:55 p.m.
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Justin

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 Deputy Mayor | Wellington City Council
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E Justin.Lester@wcc.govt.nz<<mailto:Justin.Lester@wcc.govt.nz>> | W [Wellington.govt.nz](http://wellington.govt.nz)<<http://wellington.govt.nz>>
 | [Facebook] <<https://www.facebook.com/wellingtoncitycouncil>> | [Twitter] <<http://twitter.com/wgtnc>>

[<http://wellington.govt.nz/~media/Images/email-signatures/wcc-banner-new.jpg>]<<http://wellington.govt.nz/wcc-email-campaign>>

From: Nick Bryant [<mailto:Nick.Bryant@parliament.govt.nz>]
Sent: Thursday, 24 September 2015 9:06 a.m.
To: Justin Lester
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Thanks,

Nick

Nick Bryant | Senior Press Secretary
Office of Hon Gerry Brownlee
MP for Ilam
Leader of the House
Minister of Defence
Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Minister Responsible for the Earthquake Commission
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nick.bryant@parliament.govt.nz<<mailto:nick.bryant@parliament.govt.nz>>

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Nick Bryant

From: Melissa Brenzinger <Melissa.Brenzinger@wcc.govt.nz> on behalf of Celia Wade-Brown <celia.wade-brown@wcc.govt.nz>
Sent: Friday, 25 September 2015 12:22 p.m.
To: Hon Gerry Brownlee
Cc: Justin Lester; Karen Fifield; Mat Williams; Nick Bryant
Subject: Correspondence to Minister Brownlee

Dear Minister Brownlee

On behalf of Mayor Wade-Brown and Deputy Mayor Justin Lester please find attached correspondence in regards to your trip to Chengdu and Giant Panda.

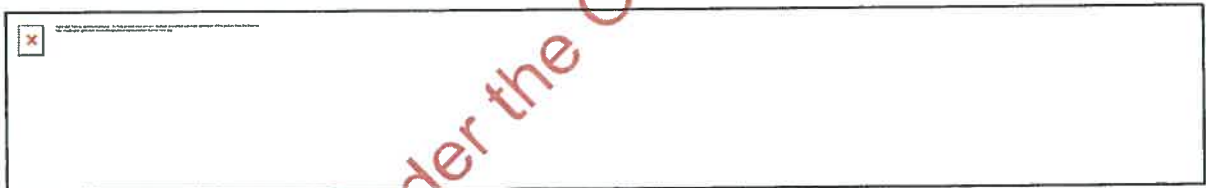
Warm regards
Melissa Brenzinger

Ngā mihi maioha,

Melissa Brenzinger

Correspondence Coordinator | Governance Directorate | Wellington City Council
P 04 801 4203 M 021 227 8356
E melissa.brenzinger@wcc.govt.nz | W Wellington.govt.nz |  

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Nick Bryant

From: Melissa Brenzinger <Melissa.Brenzinger@wcc.govt.nz>
Sent: Friday, 25 September 2015 12:44 p.m.
To: Hon Gerry Brownlee; Justin Lester; Karen Fifield; Mat Williams; Nick Bryant
Subject: FW: Correspondence to Minister Brownlee
Attachments: Correspondence to Minister Brownlee 25 September 2015.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow Up
Flag Status: Flagged

Apologies, please see attached.

From: Melissa Brenzinger **On Behalf Of** Celia Wade-Brown
Sent: Friday, 25 September 2015 12:22 p.m.
To: 'gerry.brownlee@parliament.govt.nz'
Cc: Justin Lester; Karen Fifield; 'Mathew.Williams@parliament.govt.nz'; 'Nick.Bryant@parliament.govt.nz'
Subject: Correspondence to Minister Brownlee

Dear Minister Brownlee

On behalf of Mayor Wade-Brown and Deputy Mayor Justin Lester please find attached correspondence in regards to your trip to Chengdu and Giant Panda.

Warm regards
Melissa Brenzinger

Ngā mihi maioha,

Melissa Brenzinger
 Correspondence Coordinator | Governance Directorate | Wellington City Council
 P 04 801 4203 M 021 227 8356
 E melissa.brenzinger@wcc.govt.nz | www.wellington.govt.nz |  

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25 September 2015

Parliament Office
Private Bag 18888
Parliament Buildings
Wellington 6160

Dear Minister Brownlee

This letter is to support your trip to Chengdu next week and to express our interest, depending on the level of external support, regarding the acquisition of Giant Pandas in partnership with the New Zealand and Chinese governments. The project was most recently discussed by the Mayor with the Prime Minister in late 2014 and we're delighted to see a renaissance of interest.

We would like to convey Wellington's excitement and enthusiasm for this project. We believe that Wellington, as New Zealand's capital city is the most appropriate partner city in this endeavour. As a city we are ready to act as soon as possible to ensure this venture is successful for New Zealand. Wellington's sister city relationships include Beijing and we invest considerable energy in pursuing cultural and economic relationships with Chinese cities and provinces..

We have discussed the Panda proposal again with Ross Martin, Chair of Wellington Zoo Trust and Karen Fifield, Chief Executive of Wellington Zoo who is also President of the Zoo Aquarium Association Australasia. They both echo our sentiments that this is an exciting proposal and they are very keen to progress it. They have both shown enthusiasm and commitment previously for the acquisition of Giant Panda.

All the major capital city zoos have had pandas over the last three decades (e.g. London, Paris, Berlin, Washington DC and Tokyo). Given New Zealand's relationship with China, Wellington is well positioned to join these other capital cities in hosting Giant pandas as they play a large part in diplomatic relations between the two countries.

We believe that housing Giant panda is consistent with Wellington Zoo's overall strategy and goals of being the 'best little Zoo in the world'. As the capital city zoo we see the Zoo's long term objective as being a key player in tourism, science, conservation and community engagement for New Zealand.

Wellington Zoo is one of a handful of zoos that have successfully bred and reared Malayan sun bears, evidence of our expertise in bear husbandry. Wellington Zoo is the only zoo in New Zealand that currently holds bears of any kind so we have the husbandry expertise necessary to host such precious

animals as Giant panda. Wellington Zoo also has a conservation relationship with Free the Bears Asia in regard to sun bears and we have provided husbandry and education advice to that organisation in Vietnam and Cambodia.

The Nest Te Kōhanga, the award winning, state of the art animal hospital, is the perfect place for care of Giant panda. Veterinary excellence is one of the conditions required by the Chinese government for panda host zoos. The Nest Te Kōhanga has featured on television's Wild Vets and is staffed by qualified vets and vet nurses. Wellington Zoo also has a three year veterinary Masters programme in Wildlife and Zoo Medicine for qualified vets in partnership with Massey University - the only one of its kind in New Zealand.

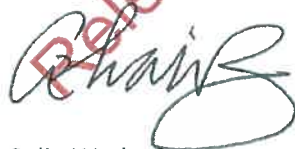
Currently all zoos that have pandas on loan from China have a research focus. Wellington Zoo has strong connections to Victoria University and Massey University in biological sciences and veterinary science; a Giant panda research team would convene to select a research angle that is point of difference for Wellington Zoo. China currently loans pandas to countries for 10 years (they arrive as juveniles) and this results in two-way information exchange about Giant pandas. Since the new era of loans began at San Diego Zoo in 1998, conservation advances have been significant. Researchers (Chinese and loan countries) have unlocked the breeding mysteries, as Giant pandas historically were poor breeders in captivity, and captive births continue to increase each year. Wellington Zoo sees supports this as a contribution to conservation of Giant panda.

We believe there is an appetite in the Wellington community to support Wellington Zoo to host Giant panda. Previously Positively Wellington Tourism has expressed their support as have other supporters of the Zoo in the community such as WWF New Zealand, various Probus and Rotary clubs, and of course, the Zoo's own membership.

We are aware that we will be guided by central government especially in regard to engaging with the Chinese Government and key interests in Wellington to ensure success.

In conclusion we would like to confirm our enthusiasm for the Giant Panda project and look forward to discussing this exciting project further with you. If you require any further information before the next phase of discussions please don't hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards



Celia Wade-Brown
Mayor of Wellington



Justin Lester
Deputy Mayor

Giant pandas

Facts for Wellington Zoo

All the major capital zoos have had pandas over the last three decades (e.g. London, Paris, Berlin, Washington DC, Tokyo). Given New Zealand's relationship with China (especially the free trade agreement), Wellington is positioned to join the other capital city's with Giant pandas.

China currently loans Giant pandas to countries for 10 years (they arrive as juveniles) and this results in two-way information exchange about Giant pandas. However some zoos have cared for Giant pandas longer than the original ten years. Since the new era of loans began at San Diego Zoo in 1998, conservation advances have been significant. Researchers (Chinese and loan countries) have unlocked the breeding mysteries, as Giant pandas historically were poor breeders in captivity, and zoo births continue to increase each year. It was only recently that Giant pandas have been released back into the wild.

Wellington has a suitable climate for Giant pandas, similar to their native mountains of Sichuan Province. Wellington has a mild weather thus the giant pandas would not have to be restricted to air-conditioned rooms during the summer.

Wellington Zoo has the staff knowledge to manage Giant pandas. Mauritz Basson is the GM, Animal Care of Wellington Zoo and previous to this was at Johannesburg Zoo where he worked with several bear species, including polar bears, grizzly bears, sun bears, and Asiatic black bears. We have a number of experienced bear keepers on staff and some have worked in the field in Asia with sun bears.

Wellington Zoo is one of a handful of the Zoos that have successfully bred and reared Sun Bears, evidence of their expertise in bear husbandry. Wellington Zoo is the only Zoo in NZ that currently hold bears of any kind so we have the husbandry expertise. Wellington Zoo also has a relationship with Free the Bears in regard to sunbears and we have provided husbandry and education advice to that organisation in Vietnam and Cambodia.

Currently all zoos that have pandas on loan from China have a research focus. Wellington Zoo has strong connections to Victoria University and Massey University in biological sciences, conservation psychology and veterinary science; a giant panda research team would convene to select a research angle that is point of difference for Wellington Zoo.

Wellington Zoo Trust

200 Daniell Street, Newtown, Wellington, New Zealand
 Ph 64-4-381 6755, Fax 64-4-803 0777
 Website www.wellingtonzoo.com
 Email wellingtonzoo@wellingtonzoo.com

Wellington Zoo previously had discussions and exchanged information with other zoos who house Giant panda, particularly Adelaide Zoo, which is an excellent comparative study in terms of size and visitation levels. Our Board Chair and the Strategic Management Team have visited Adelaide Zoo to see their Giant panda exhibit and Wellington Zoo paid for Dr Chris West, then CEO of Zoos South Australia, to visit Wellington to discuss Adelaide Zoo's Giant panda experience with us and local and central government officials.

Our state of the art animal hospital, The Nest Te Kōhanga, is unique in the world. It houses a number of veterinary experts and we have a three year masterate in zoo and wildlife medicine in partnership with Massey University- a unique qualification in the world.

Wellington has a suitable climate for growing bamboo, especially two of the giant panda's favourites (*Bambusa oldhami* and *Phyllostachys* spp.). The NZ Bamboo Society is located in Wellington and Wellington Zoo would explore partnering with the Society. We have advice from them before regarding the red panda diet.

Wellington Zoo has global connections with other zoos which house Giant panda, particularly Ocean Park in Hong Kong, The National Zoological Park in Washington (Smithsonian), San Diego Zoo and Adelaide Zoo. Collaborative projects could be developed to assist with panda research as well as any we undertake alone.

Wellington Zoo has already designated an area of the zoo to be developed for a Giant Panda exhibit. This is within our Asian precinct (with Sumatran tigers, Malayan sun bears and Snow leopards) which is located next to the NZ precinct, Meet the Locals He Tuke Aroha, which would be a link for this project. We have long term relationships with world renowned zoo exhibit designers and local project and construction firms who would be more than willing to assist us with this project. We have also had ongoing success with fundraising and commercial relationships which would also be key components for this project.

Wellington Zoo has won number of prestigious awards for exhibit design, sustainability initiatives (we are the the world's first carbonZero certified zoo) and business leadership over the past nine years. Wellington City Council and Wellington Zoo Trust have invested heavily over the past nine years to create a world standard 21st century zoo in the capital. Visitor numbers have been increasing at an average annual rate of 3% and the Zoo is an excellent financial position.

Wellington Zoo aims to connect people with animals, have people love and support and the Zoo, save animals in the wild and lead the way. The success of Wellington Zoo comes from immense community support, funder satisfaction, excellence in animal care and world leading visitor experience.

Wellington Zoo has won a number of prestigious awards over the last seven years for sustainability and environmental and business leadership and our new capital projects have also won architectural and construction awards at the highest level.

Wellington Zoo Trust

200 Daniell Street, Newtown, Wellington, New Zealand
Ph 64-4-381 6755, Fax 64-4-803 0777
Website www.wellingtonzoo.com, Email wellington.zoo@wellingtonzoo.com

WELLINGTON

ZOO

Some of these awards are listed below. We consider Wellington Zoo to be a first class zoo.

2008	Winner DOC Conservation Education & Advocacy Award, Wellington Region
2009	Winner of the Central & Southern Sustainable Business Network Awards - Sustainable Business of the Year Award and Not for Profit Award
2009	Winner of the NZI National Sustainable Business Network People's Choice Award
2009	Karen Fifield, Winner HER Regional Wellington Businesswoman of the Year Awards - Sustainability Award and Outstanding Corporate Leadership Award
2010	Zoo and Aquarium Association Best Large Exhibit Award - The Nest Te Kōhanga (a first for a NZ zoo)
2010	Winner Green Gold, Wellington Gold Awards – Positive Sustainability Practices
2010	Karen Fifield, Winner Bloom HER Business Awards – Outstanding Business Leader
2010	Winner Business Environmental Leadership Award, Encore Awards
2011	NZ Zoo and Aquarium Association Conservation Award - The Nest Te Kōhanga
2010	Finalist Ministry for the Environment Green Ribbon Awards for Small businesses making a difference
2011	Dr Lisa Argilla, Veterinary Science Manager, Wellingtonian of the Year, Environment
2009-2013	Construction and Architecture awards for The Nest Te Kōhanga, Wild Theatre, Kamala's Function Centre
2013	Winner, Vibrant Gold (events, hospitality & visitor activities), Wellington Gold Awards
2013	Sustainable 60 Winner - Marketplace
2013	First carbonZero certified Zoo in the world
2014	Amy Hughes, GM Community Engagement, finalist in the Wellingtonian of the Year Awards- Education
2014	Zoo and Aquarium Association Best Small Exhibit Award from a Large Institution — Hero HQ.
2014	Oli du Bern, Visitor Experience Manager, finalist in the NZIM Eagle Technology young Executive of the Year

For further information please contact:

Karen Fifield
 Chief Executive
 Wellington Zoo
Karen.fifield@wellingtonzoo.com
 Phone +64212278129

Wellington Zoo Trust

200 Daniell Street, Newtown, Wellington, New Zealand
 Ph 64-4-381 6755, Fax 64-4-803 0777
 Website www.wellingtonzoo.com, Email wellington.zoo@wellingtonzoo.com



Gemma Turney

From: Nick Bryant
Sent: Tuesday, 20 October 2015 6:59 p.m.
To: Gemma Turney
Subject: FW: Panda statement

Hi Gems,

I remembered the emails below, from my temporary overseas email address, for the OIA request you're compiling.

Thanks,

Nick

From: OS Bryant
Sent: Tuesday, 20 October 2015 6:20:54 p.m.
To: Nick Bryant
Subject: FW: Panda statement

Sent with Good (www.good.com)

From: OS Bryant
Sent: Wednesday, 30 September 2015 10:24:42 a.m.
To: Phil Reed; Haley Mortimer; Justin Lester
Subject: RE: Panda statement

Morning Phil,

We'll be delivering the backgrounder on the WCC case in about four hours. Please be clear, this was a courtesy offered to WCC by our office as we happened to be traveling here this week on a long arranged visit which happened to coincide with publicity over the WCC proposal, so it seemed only sensible to help if we could. The Prime Minister's office has not been involved.

We've got no issues with it being public. It's a somewhat moot point in fact, as before we'd even arrived in China someone had told Paddy Gower from TV3 that we'd be involved in what he referred to as "panda diplomacy," so news travels fast.

Once I know who we've delivered the background document to, and have any further comment I'll be in touch.

Kind regards,

Nick

Sent with Good (www.good.com)

From: Phil Reed
Sent: Wednesday, 30 September 2015 9:30:08 a.m.
To: Haley Mortimer; Justin Lester; OS Bryant
Subject: RE: Panda statement

Thanks Haley, and nice to speak with you this morning.

And good morning to Nick, hope you're enjoying China.

As we discussed this morning, the Deputy Mayor and our office would like clarification on the protocol for discussing the content of the letter – we're happy for it to be public, do you see any issues with this approach?

Also keen to know a bit of about the process – to whom was the letter delivered and in what context, was it a request from the Prime Minister to deliver etc; we're keen to cover off any questions that might be asked about how the letter was passed on to our Chinese contacts.

Many thanks,
Phil

Phil Reed

Acting Chief of Staff | Office of the Mayor
Te Tari Matua Mana Whakahaere | Wellington City Council
P 04 801 3119 | M 021 247 9720
E Phil.Reed@wcc.govt.nz | W Wellington.govt.nz |  

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From: Haley Mortimer [<mailto:Haley.Mortimer@parliament.govt.nz>]
Sent: Wednesday, 30 September 2015 9:23 a.m.
To: Phil Reed; Justin Lester; OS Bryant
Subject: Panda statement

Good morning Phil,

Thank you for phone-call. As discussed, the statement below is what has been issued to media outlets reactively this morning.

"The primary purpose and vast majority of our visit is bilateral defence relations. Our hosts, the People's Liberation Army, booked us to visit the breeding facility while we are in Chengdu, as they are very proud of their pandas.

This was also the site of the 2008 Sichuan earthquake, and they are showing us how they've rebuilt. The visit to the panda breeding facility was arranged by our hosts well before the recent publicity about Wellington City Council's proposal. However, as we're here we offered to hand over a document detailing the council proposal."

As Nick Bryant is travelling with the Minister, and was the original liaison for this letter, I have copied him into the email so he will be able to answer any further questions you may have.

Kind regards,

Haley

Haley Mortimer | Private Secretary (Media) to Hon Gerry Brownlee

Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery | Minister of Defence

Leader of the House | Minister Responsible for the Earthquake Commission

Member of Parliament for Ilam

Parliament Buildings | Private Bag 18041 | Wellington 6160 | Tel: +64 4 817 8378 | Mob: +64 21 672 510

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