

Reference: 20260356

17 July 2026

Joyce
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Dear Joyce

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request, received on 20 May 2026. You requested the following (numbered for ease of response):

Recent announcements show that one in five public servants will lose their jobs (when you exclude the unaffected agencies). Please provide all advice provided to Minister of Finance regarding:

- 1. how a head count reduction will resolve debt, compared to other forms of saving such as the more than \$1 billion spent by public service agencies on contractors and consultants annually (figures were obtained from AI).*
- 2. why the National Emergency Agency with civil defence functions, are included as an agency subject to the cuts when recent Government Inquiries have highlighted shortfalls of resourcing for emergency management functions.*
- 3. NZ has one of the highest number of Ministers per population ratio in the developed world. What is the potential cost savings, and head count reduction, through the consolidation of reduction of Ministerial portfolios. Will Ministers also be subject to the cuts? (Each Ministerial portfolio is supported by staff - have these costs been considered also?)*
- 4. the economic and social costs for restructures of agencies. Information collected on the cost of restructures cost - AI indicates that a single government agency spent in excess of \$1M on consultants for a restructure and that in the past 12 months there were over \$80M spent on redundancy payouts by government agencies.*

On 18 June 2026, the time limit for making a decision on your request was extended by 20 working days to 17 July 2026.

Parts one and three

There is no advice currently in scope of parts one and three of your request. Accordingly, I am refusing these parts of your request under section 18(g) of the OIA, as the information is not held.

Regarding part one, you may be interested in broader advice on sustainable fiscal policy, including returning to surplus and stabilising net debt, as outlined in the Treasury's [2025 Long-term Insights Briefing](#) and [2025 Long-term Fiscal Statement](#).

You may also be interested to know that the Government has already realised significant savings in contractor and consultant operating expenditure (OPEX). The incoming government sought to reduce OPEX contractor and consultation expenditure from \$2.16B 2022/23 to where it is today. The Public Service Commission publishes

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<https://treasury.govt.nz>

quarterly reporting on contractor and consultant operating expenditure on their website:
[Workforce size - Public Service Commission Te Kawa Mataaho](#).

Parts two and four

Parts two and four of your request is withheld under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the OIA, to maintain the current constitutional conventions protecting the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials.

You may be interested to know that documents relating to Budget decisions on the public service changes will be released as part of the Budget 2026 information release later this year. The documents will be available on the Budget website:
<https://budget.govt.nz/>.

The Public Service Commission also intends to proactively publish the advice it provided to Ministers on public service transformation. Once published, this information will be available on the Commission's website via the following link
<https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/publications>.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) and enclosed documents may be published on the Treasury website.

This reply addresses the information you requested. Under section 28(3) of the OIA, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at:
info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

Ashlee Bowles
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