

14 September 2012

Philip Lyth
Email fyi-requet-509-5cd761ae@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Lyth

OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST – PASSPORT APPLICATION FORMS

Thank you for your email of 21 August 2012 requesting information in relation to the decision making process for changes to the passport application forms.

The Department of Internal Affairs introduced a new set of passport application forms in October 2010 as part of the Department's Passport Redevelopment Programme.

The new set of forms were introduced to:-

- Support the use of new technology, which scans data directly from the application form, into the Passport System.
- To reduce the amount of information applicants are required to provide, when they are simply renewing their passport
- To ensure the forms can be easily understood and completed by the general public.
- To minimise the errors made by applicants when completing the forms.

Although these changes have seen the single passport application split into three separate application forms, the information being requested is fundamentally the same.

The information provided on the form enables the Department to determine a person's entitlement to hold a New Zealand passport and the witness/identity referee section, and certification of the passport photograph is used to verify the applicant's identity. It is not a requirement for passport applicants to present themselves in person as part of the application process and we have been unable to locate any historic information which indicates this as a previous requirement.

As changes to passport application form fall within operational policy, the changes made in October 2010 did not require a change in law or change to the Passports Act 1992. The changes were approved by the General Manager, Identity Services as part of the wider Passports Redevelopment Programme and also as the changes involve a rebranding of the forms.



Attached are the following documents which fall within the scope of your request.

- Memo dated 10 February 2010
- Memo dated 9 April 2010 – Approval for Form Design
- Memo dated 6 July 2012 – Approval of Form Design and Print Volume Order

Ongoing changes to passport forms are made as a business as usual process, based on operation changes, customer feedback and to minimise common errors. The approval process for any minor changes is informal and approved at an Operation Manager level.

Information has been withheld pursuant to section 9(2)(b)(ii) of the Official Information Act in that:

the withholding of the information is necessary to—

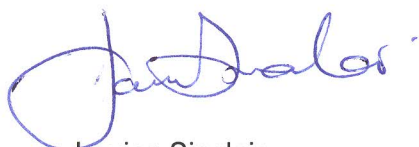
(b) protect information where the making available of the information –

(ii) would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information

You have the right, by way of complaint under section 28(3) of the Act to an Ombudsman, to seek an investigation and review of the decision to withhold information. The Ombudsman's address for contact purposes is:

The Ombudsman
Office of the Ombudsmen
PO Box 10-152
WELLINGTON

Yours sincerely



Louise Sinclair
Acting General Manager
Passport Office
Department of Internal Affairs

