



2 October 2017

D Dahya
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Dear D Dahya

Thank you for your further Official Information Act (OIA) request, received on 14 September 2017. You have asked about our 3 July 2017 response to your previous OIA request, particularly regarding our reply that "providing written references for employees is not standard practice".

Your follow-up questions (numbered for ease of reference) are:

- 1) *Currently is there a requirement to notify potential employees of this policy prior to their employment with IRD and, if so, is it in written form?*
- 2) *At what point are employees made aware of this policy?*
- 3) *Do you consider this policy potentially oppressive or obstructive if applicants are not advised of this policy prior to signing an employment agreement and if references are only provided in verbal form?*
- 4) *Is there not more of a requirement for future employees/applicants to be advised of this policy prior to the start of their employment with IRD on the basis that only verbal references will be provided, not written ones, and it is not mandatory to provide one at all?*
- 5) *What happens in the following scenario where the Leader has left the organisation and can no longer be contacted and an employment opportunity is dependant on the provision of a reference for a former employee?*
- 6) *How then, are you able to obtain a reference if written references are not provided?*
 - a) *Regarding the above scenario is the current policy ineffective?*
 - b) *Does this not leave the power of employment opportunities in the hands of the Leader after the employee's departure?*
- 7) *Does the current policy clearly state references can only be provided by a certain (or only one) leader ie a manager etc, and verbally only and that the Leader is not obligated to provide one?*
- 8) *Does it explain what to do if that Leader leaves the organisation after the employee does?*
- 9) *Should the policy allow for a written reference to be provided?*
- 10) *I earned a salary increase during my time there but did not have access to a reference because of the policy -if this is correct should the policy be changed?*
- 11) *Do future employees have a right to know about the policy prior to employment?*
- 12) *Are employees disadvantaged by not being informed of this policy prior to employment at IRD?*
- 13) *Is it correct that employees have access to this policy after he/she has signed an employment agreement?*
- 14) *How is any potential employee able to inquire, challenge, object to the terms of this policy if they are not made aware of it prior to their employment term?*

- 15) *I have been advised on at least 2 occasions that the policy does not allow references to be provided ... I myself was not able to obtain a reference from my manager because of the policy.*

Questions 1, 2, 11, 13 and 14

The *Ending Employment Policy* is part of Inland Revenue's *People Policies & Guidelines*. There is no requirement to notify potential employees of our *Ending Employment Policy* before they are employed. However, anyone who is going through our recruitment process can ask to see our *People Policies & Guidelines*.

Our *People Policies & Guidelines* are published on the staff intranet. All staff can access the policy at any time, from the day they start working at Inland Revenue.

Questions 3, 4, 7, 9, 10 and 12

The *Ending Employment Policy* does not state that only a specific or single leader can provide a verbal reference, or that leaders are not obliged to provide a reference. However, the policy does make it clear that written references, describing the quality of an individual's performance, are not provided to employees. Inland Revenue will provide a *Statement of service*.

As noted in my response to you of 3 July 2017, a *Statement of service* sets out an employee's date of joining, last day of employment, position held on exit, reason for leaving, employment status, and periods of leave without pay.

Many organisations operate under a similar policy of not providing written references. Inland Revenue does not believe this disadvantages former employees, or that the policy needs to be changed. A salary increase alone does not provide evidence to support a reference about the quality of an individual's performance.

Questions 5, 6, 6a, 6b and 8

It is an individual's responsibility to maintain contact with potential future referees who can provide references about the quality of their performance. Leaders are not obliged to provide a reference; doing so is at their discretion. This policy is not ineffective, as we can provide a *Statement of service*.

Question 15

As noted in my previous response, The *Ending Employment Policy* clearly states that leaders may provide verbal references. The *Ending Employment Policy* is Inland Revenue's only official policy regarding providing references to employees and former employees.

Thank you for your request. I trust that my further response has clarified Inland Revenue's policy regarding references.

Yours sincerely



Mark Daldorf
Chief People Officer