



NEW ZEALAND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE



New Zealand Ministry of
Foreign Affairs and Trade
Minatū Aotearoa

19 June 2018

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Dear Suzanne Newton

I refer to your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request of 21 March 2018 to the Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services. Your request was partially transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) on 25 May 2018, and seeks the following under the OIA:

"I would like to know the full amount of the cost to the New Zealand tax payer for the visit of Ex-President Barack Obama to New Zealand in March 2018.

Included in this, but not exclusive to, I would like to know the full cost of any travel, vehicles, security measures, accommodation, meals, Special Services, time involved in preparation and closing of the visit, NZ Police special services, signage, road closures, special clothing and other such items, wages for extra personnel, payments to staff and/or others involved, price of any gifts, rewards, or any items given to Barack Obama, and/or any person engaged or connect to the visit, e.g. John Key, who may have been paid, received gifts, wages, items or such to be part of this event.

In short I would like to know exactly what the cost to New Zealand has been to host an ex-President. I would also like to know what justification, i.e. financial benefit to New Zealand, this visit is meant to produce.

I would like that in a dollar amount, as I am sure New Zealand is not in the habit of giving expensive holidays to the now unemployed without some benefit to ALL New Zealanders."

We are responding to your request as far as it relates to any costs that may been incurred by MFAT in relation to the visit and to the justification *"this visit is meant to produce"*.

The total cost to MFAT for supporting the visit was \$6,424. This was entirely relating to the travel costs for MFAT staff supporting the visit of the US advance team and the visit by former US President Obama.

Attached is the document relevant to your request. Some portions of the document are withheld under the following sections of the OIA:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the international relations of the New Zealand Government;
- 9(2)(a): to protect individuals' privacy; and
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments.

We hope that the attached document sufficiently addresses your questions about the visit.

Where the information has been withheld under section 9 of the OIA, no public interest in releasing the information has been identified that would be sufficient to override the reasons for withholding it.

You have the right under section 28(3) of the OIA to seek a review of this response by the Ombudsman.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Adams', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Wendy Adams
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade