



4 October 2024

9(2)(a)

OIAD-1207

Tēnā koe 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email dated 16 August 2024 to the Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

*Regarding the 2024 change processes:*

- 1) *How many roles have been or will be disestablished overall? How many have been established?*
- 2) *Any communication internally regarding concerns on the impact to the frontline from March 1 to August 16 2024*
- 3) *Any communication between management and leadership regarding leaks around the change process, from March 1 to August 16 2024*
- 4) *All communication between the CE and the Minister from March 1 to August 16, 2024 regarding the change process.*
- 5) *How much has been spent on leadership leaving/arriving events or parties in 2024?*
- 6) *How much has been saved on the contractors and consultant spend through the change process?*
- 7) *How many times was the counselling service used between March 1 to August 16 2024, compared to the same time in 2023?*
- 8) *The change process decision document*
- 9) *Any reviews conducted after the change process was implemented, regarding the change process.*

In our letter dated 10 September 2024, we provided you with our decision on parts 2, 3 and 9 of your request. I address each part of the remainder of your request in turn below.

**Part 1) How many roles have been or will be disestablished overall? How many have been established?**

The Minister of Finance, Hon Nicola Willis, announced as part of the mini-Budget in December 2023, the Government is seeking \$1.5 billion per annum in savings to deliver on policy commitments and fund critical cost pressures. Minister Willis asked agencies to identify savings options of either 6.5 percent or 7.5 percent, depending on how much their full-time staff numbers increased since 2017. Agencies were then asked to identify credible savings proposals.

Throughout 2023/24, the Ministry took a number of steps to prepare for our declining baseline including employing new people on fixed term. We also began strict recruitment controls and chose not to fill about 200 positions we were funded for in 2024. In addition, we continued to reduce the use of contractors and consultants.

The Ministry's 2024 change process will transition the Ministry to a smaller workforce over two years, while keeping in line with our operating model. The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff will reduce from the 993 FTE employed as at 27 May 2024 (the date the change proposal was released) to 836 FTE in 2024/25, and further reduce to 707.5 FTE in 2025/26.

Implementation of the Ministry's new structure under the current change process is expected to be on 1 November 2024.

**Part 4) All communication between the CE and the Minister from March 1 to August 16, 2024 regarding the change process**

We have identified 17 emails, attachments and text messages in scope of this part of your request, as outlined in the attached document table and attached as **Appendix 1**.

I am releasing 13 of these documents in full and releasing four in part with mobile numbers withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act to protect individuals' privacy, and out of scope information removed.

In terms of section 9(1) of the Act, I am satisfied that, in the circumstances, the withholding of this information is not outweighed by other considerations that render it desirable to make the information available in the public interest.

**Part 5) How much has been spent on leadership leaving/arriving events or parties in 2024?**

We have interpreted your reference to 'leadership' as being for Tier 1 or Tier 2 management (Chief Executive and/or Deputy Secretaries). In 2024, we held one event in scope of your request; the Pōwhiri held to formally welcome our Tumuaki Tuarua | Deputy Secretary for Tūmatakōkiri. The costs associated with this event totalled **\$1,759.80**. This includes costs for catering and domestic travel for staff attending outside of Wellington.

Note that the data has been captured using specific keywords relating to the event, which were based on manual entry; if any transactions were incorrectly labelled or coded, they would not have been captured.

**Part 6) How much has been saved on the contractors and consultant spend through the change process?**

Te Kawa Mataaho | the Public Service Commission (PSC) are responsible for monitoring and ensuring that collectively, agencies are managing their contractor and consultant forecasts in order to meet the Government's expectations. Further information about this can be found on the PSC website at: [publicservice.govt.nz/assets/DirectoryFile/Report-Achieving-Fiscal-Savings-and-Reducing-Spend-on-Contractors-and-Consultants.pdf](https://publicservice.govt.nz/assets/DirectoryFile/Report-Achieving-Fiscal-Savings-and-Reducing-Spend-on-Contractors-and-Consultants.pdf).

The drive to reduce the Ministry's contractor and consultant spend is outside of the scope of the ongoing change processes. Since our change process is focused on permanent and fixed term kaimahi, any savings on contractors and consultants will be incidental to the ongoing change process.

**Part 7) How many times was the counselling service used between March 1 to August 16, 2024, compared to the same time in 2023?**

We have interpreted this part of your request as being for the number of counselling sessions that were attended, rather than the number of individuals attending sessions.

The Ministry's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) had 272 appointments attended during the period 1 March to 16 August 2023. For the period 1 March to 31 August 2024, 334 appointments were attended.

It is important to note that EAP can be accessed for a variety of reasons, and in 2024, was accessed for career advice, financial advice, stress and anxiety, and concerns relating to restructuring. EAP can also be accessed for legal advice, if required.

## **Part 8) The change process decision document**

The Ministry's final decision document, "Resetting the Ministry" is split into eight documents: one summary document and a detailed breakdown for each business group. These documents are being released to you in full, as outlined in the below document table and attached as **Appendix 2**.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of my decisions relating to this request, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on their website at: [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz).

Please note that due to the public interest in our work the Ministry for the Environment publishes responses to requests for official information on our [OIA responses page](#) shortly after the response has been sent. If you have any queries about this, please feel free to contact our Ministerial Services team: [ministerials@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:ministerials@mfe.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely



**Tracey Kaio**  
General Manager, People and Capability  
Ministry for the Environment | Manatū Mō Te Taiao

### Document schedule

Doc no.	Doc date	Content	Decisions	Grounds
<b>Appendix 1 – Question 4</b>				
1.	2 April 2024	Email: No surprises: Impending voluntary redundancy process at MfE	Release in part	9(2)(a)
2.	2 April 2024	Attachment: Minister Simmonds – Voluntary Redundancy Notification	Release in full	
3.	2 April 2024	Email: No surprises: Impending voluntary redundancy process at MfE	Release in part	9(2)(a)
4.	2 April 2024	Attachment: Minister Willis – Voluntary Redundancy Notification	Release in full	
5.	2 April 2024	Email: No surprises: Impending voluntary redundancy process at MfE	Release in part	9(2)(a)
6.	2 April 2024	Attachment: Minister Bishop – Voluntary Redundancy Notification	Release in full	
7.	19 April 2024	Email: MfE proposed changes to position descriptions and future pay	Release in full	
8.	19 April 2024	Email: MfE proposed changes to position descriptions and future pay	Release in full	
9.	19 April 2024	Email: MfE proposed changes to position descriptions and future pay	Release in full	
10.	19 April 2024	Email: MfE proposed changes to position descriptions and future pay	Release in full	
11.	6 June 2024	Text Messages: re: announcement	Release in full	
12.	6 June 2024	Text Messages: re: announcement	Release in full	
13.	27 June 2024	Text message: re: financials	Release in part	Out of scope
14.	27 June 2024	Text message: re: financials	Release in full	
15.	19 July 2024	Email: Update on final decisions following consultation	Release in full	
16.	19 July 2024	Email: Update on final decisions following consultation	Release in full	
17.	19 July 2024	Email: Update on final decisions following consultation	Release in full	
<b>Appendix 2 – Question 8</b>				
1.	25 July 2024	Resetting the Ministry – final decision document	Release in full	
2.	25 July 2024	Resetting the Ministry – Business Transformation and Services	Release in full	
3.	25 July 2024	Resetting the Ministry – Climate Change Mitigation & Resource Efficiency	Release in full	
4.	25 July 2024	Resetting the Ministry – Environmental Management & Adaptation	Release in full	
5.	25 July 2024	Resetting the Ministry – Office of the Chief Executive and Climate Change Chief Executives Board	Release in full	
6.	25 July 2024	Resetting the Ministry – Partnerships, Investment & Enablement	Release in full	
7.	25 July 2024	Resetting the Ministry – Strategy, Stewardship & Performance	Release in full	
8.	25 July 2024	Resetting the Ministry – Tūmatakōkiri (Māori Strategy & Performance)	Release in full	