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Tēnā koe 9(2)a

Thank you for your email of 24 January 2024 to the Ministry of the Environment (the Ministry) requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

1. *How much funding, if any, has been provided to The Aotearoa Circle from the Ministry for the Environment since 2018?*
2. *Please provide the detail behind each of the funding arrangements MFE has undertaken with the Aotearoa Circle. Please explain whether these payments are ongoing, a series of grants, a one-off transfer, or loan/s? etc.*
3. *Is MFE looking to provide the Aotearoa Circle with more funding going forward. If so, how much, and why?*
4. *Please provide the rationale for each funding arrangement/grant MFE has undertaken with The Aotearoa Circle so far, and what MFE is looking to get out of it? Are there any metrics to determine whether the funding has been successful? I.e, the production of x number of reports, x% lower emissions in x sector etc.*

In response to question 1 of the request, we have provided the detail of funding to date by financial year from 2021 to 2023 to you in a document titled *The Aotearoa Circle funding details for OIAD-932*. We note that the first payment made to the Aotearoa Circle was in the 2021 financial year.

The funding arrangements between the Ministry and the Aotearoa Circle are categorised as contribution payments (partnership) from the Ministry's Departmental funding, the payments are not loans. The Ministry has Leading Partner membership status with the Aotearoa Circle and has provided funding to support their prioritisation and implementation of actions across a range of work programmes related to the Ministry's objectives, including sector climate adaptation and mitigation.

Beyond the 2023 annual membership fee, the Ministry has not confirmed any future funding.

The Ministry or the Aotearoa Circle do not record specific metrics to determine the success of the funding arrangements. However, the Aotearoa Circle engages with all partners, including the Ministry, to produce detailed workstream reports and end of year reviews. These include outcomes and data and can be found on the Aotearoa Circle website, available here: theaotearoacircle.nz/reports-resources

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of my decision to withhold information 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.

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.

Ngā mihi,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lorena Stephen', is positioned above the printed name.

Lorena Stephen,
General Manager – Partnerships and Investments
Ministry for the Environment | Manatū Mō Te Taiao