



Dear [REDACTED]

On 26 July 2019 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *Total number of airline tickets purchased in 18/19 financial year*
- *Breakdown by domestic vs international*
- *Any internal plans to reduce airline travel*
- *Job titles of the top 5 travellers*
- *Any other information that would help the public understand the departments use of airline travel.*

The Ministry ensures it balances travel purposes with financial and environmental accountability, which is why the Ministry has specific policies relating to air travel.

The Ministry has over 7,000 staff, working in over 150 locations around New Zealand and in our National Office in Wellington. Domestic travel is necessary for many reasons including:

- enabling staff to deliver services across the regions
- enabling staff to represent Central Government working with applicants, stakeholders and the community
- providing coaching to local leaders and staff, with a focus of building sustained leadership capability to meaningfully improve social services to New Zealanders.

On occasions, Ministry staff travel overseas to fulfil business purposes with the majority of overseas travel being to Australia. Sharing information and learning from best practice across jurisdictions helps to make sure our services remain effective.

The amount the Ministry spends on travel is less than 0.4% of the Ministry's overall spend on departmental expenses.

Airline travel by Ministry staff is covered by the Ministry's Travel Policy and is approved by budget managers with the appropriate delegated financial authority. This policy requires that any spending on travel takes into account the following principles:

- must be justified for business purposes, moderate, and economical having regard to purpose, distance, time, urgency, personal health, safety and security and costs
- in the interest of cost effectiveness, consideration should be given to using the most economical fares and accommodation, including travelling during off-peak hours, using discounted fares and retaining flexibility on return travel
- alternatives to travel must also be considered, such as using video and/or telephone conferences.

The Ministry's airline travel may be affected by future government policy directives one of which is to: 'Support the transition to a net zero emissions economy and assist the Government to meet its goal of significant reduction in waste by 2020 and beyond.' Additionally, the Ministry incorporates the Government Procurement Rules in considering how airline travel is managed. You can find more information regarding Government Procurement Rules here:

[www.procurement.govt.nz/assets/procurement-property/documents/government-procurement-rules.pdf](http://www.procurement.govt.nz/assets/procurement-property/documents/government-procurement-rules.pdf)

You may be interested to know that during the 2017 Auckland fuel pipeline crisis, the Ministry's Chief Executive of the day directed all Ministry staff to cancel non-essential air travel to Auckland until further notice. Ministry staff responded accordingly by reviewing and cancelling their flights (if necessary) or deferring their flights to a later date.

The Ministry has recently joined the Air New Zealand FlyNeutral carbon credit offset programme to help mitigate or reduce the impact its air travel has on the environment. This enables the Ministry to purchase carbon credits from certified emissions reductions projects that permanently avoid or remove carbon from the atmosphere. You can find more information about the Air New Zealand FlyNeutral carbon credit offset programme on the Air New Zealand website here:

[www.airnewzealand.co.nz/sustainability-customer-carbon-offset#about](http://www.airnewzealand.co.nz/sustainability-customer-carbon-offset#about)

The table below shows the total number of airline tickets purchased in the 2018/2019 financial year, broken down by whether the travel was domestic or international.

<b>Market</b>	<b>Count of Unique Booking</b>
Domestic	8,768 (99.4%)
International	15
Trans Tasman	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,825</b>

The Ministry has identified below its current top five travellers, by job title. They are ranked by booking volume from number one to number five:

1. Group General Manager Client Service Delivery
2. Manager MSD Approvals
3. Director Industry Partnerships
4. Business Coach Corporate Solutions
5. Manager Fraud Intervention Services

All five roles are responsible for providing services across the regions requiring them to travel on a regular basis. Many of the staff identified above have people management responsibilities across more than one region. The cost of travel is balanced against not having a manager physically located in each site or region.

The Ministry is always looking for ways to reduce costs including how we can better utilise technology to facilitate meetings rather than travelling. However, as one of the largest public service organisations and with a strong local presence across New Zealand, there will always be a need for our staff to travel.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public shortly. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact [OIA\\_Requests@msd.govt.nz](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding airline travel, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



PP Stephen Crombie  
**Deputy Chief Executive Corporate Solutions**