



25 FEB 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

On 27 January 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *Any advice, including but not limited to emails, reports and/ or memos, provided to your employees about the use of the application 'TikTok' on their work mobile phone between September 2019 and January 27th, 2020.*

The Ministry does not use TikTok as an official platform for recording or sending official information and has not issued any specific advice to its employees on the use of TikTok.

As such, your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

General advice on the use of mobile phone applications is contained in the Ministry's Acceptable use of Technology policy, which contains the following clause:

"Only install approved software or technology on Ministry systems where authorised and following related processes. Apps may be downloaded on to Ministry mobile devices from official or approved app stores."

This general advice dated 28 March 2017 also applies to the use of TikTok. In addition, the Acceptable use of Technology policy links to various other guidelines about the use of mobile devices and the handling of Ministry information. This material includes that staff should not be transmitting Ministry information via an app such as TikTok that has not been approved for Ministry use.

The vulnerability associated with TikTok concerns the unencrypted transmission of images, videos, and likes. This allows an attacker to extract private sensitive information by sniffing network traffic.

At present, approximately 100 Ministry Devices have TikTok installed. This is not surprising or concerning as the Ministry allows both BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) and personal use of mobile devices under certain conditions.

The Ministry stores Ministry data on iOS devices. However, this is not at risk from the vulnerability referred to above. The Ministry's mobile device management (MDM)

provides various security features including functions such as “application wrapping” that prevent data being copied from a supported application to an unsupported application.

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. 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 regarding advice on the use of the TikTok app on Ministry mobile phones with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response, 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 or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Anurag Madan', is written over a horizontal line.

Anurag Madan
Chief Technology Officer