



08 JUL 2021

Tēnā koe

On 14 June 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *Why was BP provided with an exemption on items that could be purchased with WINZ cards?*
- *Was this exception offered or provided to other similar service providers?*
- *Who had the idea to introduce the exemption?*
- *On what grounds was the exemption provided?*

For clarity, I will respond to your questions in turn.

- *Why was BP provided with an exemption on items that could be purchased with WINZ cards?*

I can confirm that BP were not provided with an exemption on items that could be purchased with a Work and Income payment card. However, the Ministry would not expect suppliers to compromise their staff's safety in order to enforce the use of payment cards on approved items only.

BP approached the Ministry in December 2019 to advise that due to staff safety issues, they could no longer enforce the use of payment card money on approved items only. They told us that if the Ministry required them to continue enforcing use of the cards on approved items only, then they would no longer accept the payment cards. Most clients use their payments cards in the right way. We were faced with the situation that some clients might not be able to purchase necessary items such as petrol in situations of urgent need.

We value the relationship that we have with our partners and do not wish them to place themselves in a situation that will compromise their health, safety or security. The Ministry acknowledges that while suppliers agree to monitor the purchase of restricted items as per the supplier agreement, suppliers need to also balance the safety of their own staff. There are only a small number of occasions when payment cards are not used in the way they are intended to be. Where the Ministry is made aware of a situation where a client has incorrectly used a payment card to purchase non-approved items, we would consider appropriate action on a case by case basis.

In general, retailers are helpful in ensuring the funds are spent for the purposes intended.

More information about Work and Income payment cards can be found on the Ministry's website here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/providers/payment-card-suppliers/index.html.

- *Was this exception offered or provided to other similar service providers?*
- *Who had the idea to introduce the exemption?*
- *On what grounds was the exemption provided?*

As the Ministry did not provide BP or any other supplier with an exemption to sell non-approved items, these questions are refused under section 18(e) of the Act as the requested information does not exist.

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 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 with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response to your request for information regarding Work and Income Payment cards, 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.

Ngā mihi nui



Jo Herewini
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