



11 May 2022

Tēnā koe

On 8 April 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *Since March 2020, how many "away days" or retreats have the executive/senior leaders in your organisation been on? Please get in touch if your organisation leaders refer to a similar thing - a trip which involves team bonding or otherwise is about leaders having hui together out of a traditional meeting format - but by another word.*
- *Can each away day/retreat be broken down by:*
 - *Dates and locations (including town and name of accommodation)*
 - *Which leaders attended*
 - *Budget for the retreat (broken down by travel, accommodation, food and drink, entertainment, and any other category you feel is relevant)*
 - *What was the purpose of the retreat?*
- *Did any leaders produce a positive Covid-19 test within a fortnight of returning from the retreat?*

The Ministry has interpreted your request for information on 'executive / senior leaders' to be in reference to the Ministry's Leadership Team and senior managers. The Leadership Team (LT) is the primary governance body for the Ministry. It is led by the Chief Executive and comprises seven Deputy Chief Executives and the Director Office of the Chief Executive. More information about our LT and their roles is available on the Ministry's website, here:

www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/about-msd/leadership-team/index.html.

Each year the Ministry organises a number of forums for staff and senior managers. The Leaders' Forums and Leadership Summits bring together senior leaders from across the Ministry to actively engage in discussions about strategic issues for the organisation. These engagement opportunities include internal and external speakers and seek to support managers to lead Ministry staff.

The Ministry publishes our spending for internal conferences, seminars, staff retreats, and offsite training or planning and teambuilding exercises in our Annual Reviews. This information is available in answer to question 101 of our Annual Review on the Parliament website for the following financial years:

- 2019/20 - www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/53SCSS_EVI_104508_SS1005/c9283dd60c981b317cf34f8e83fb2b638c5ec395.
- 2020/21 - www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/53SCSS_EVI_116592_SS2483/3224760dbc9f284459d54de153205fd1b770bea6.

Information for the financial year 2021/22 has not been published yet as the financial year is still underway.

For LT, weekly governance meetings are complemented by quarterly strategic meetings. In addition, Away Days are also held approximately three times per year. LT Away Days offer longer sessions to delve more deeply into priority areas for the Ministry, undertake strategic planning and are generally held offsite.

Between March 2020 to the date of your request, LT have attended a total of five separate Away Days. This is comprised of one in 2020, three in 2021 and one in 2022. I refer you to **Table One** attached as **Appendix One** showing the LT Away Days since March 2020 broken down by location, attendees and costs.

The Ministry's LT will attempt, where possible, to keep the associated costs from Away Days to a minimum. This often means that LT will provide their own catering for Away Days from their personal funds.

Throughout the planning of staff Away Days, the developing situation of the COVID-19 pandemic has always been considered, including cancellation of any Away Days if necessary. Where Away Days have gone ahead, the Ministry has

always adhered to the settings of the Alert Levels or COVID-19 Protection Framework of the time.

Information relating to the COVID-19 test results of Ministry staff is refused under section 9(2)(a) of the Act in order to protect the privacy of natural persons as this is considered private medical information. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information.

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'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, 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



Magnus O'Neill
General Manager
Ministerial & Executive Services



Appendix One

Table One: Leadership Away Days since March 2020 broken down by location, attendees and costs.

	11/12 August 2020	25/26 Feb 2021	13/14 July 2021	2/3 Nov 2021	10 March 2022
Location	Martinborough, The Claremont Motel and Apartments	Martinborough, The Claremont Motel and Apartments	Martinborough, The Claremont Motel and Apartments	Martinborough, The Claremont Motel and Apartments	Wellington, Chapman Tripp
Attendees	All 9 LT staff	All 9 LT staff	8 LT staff - one member did not attend.	All 9 LT staff	All 9 LT staff
Costs	Accommodation: \$1,452.17 Conference room: \$270 Food/catering: \$1,153.90	Accommodation: \$1,340 Conference room and catering: \$912.52	Accommodation: \$1,215 Conference room and catering: \$1,013.04	Accommodation: \$1,213.04 Conference room: \$260.87 Catering: \$510	Catering: \$373.75
Total	\$2,876.07	\$2,252.52	\$2,228.04	\$1,983.91	\$373.75

Notes:

- In some instances, the conference room and catering costs cannot be broken down further based on the information held on the Ministry's systems.
- Some catering costs may also include catering provided for external attendees.