



22 September 2023

Tēnā koe

On 27 August 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *Cost of welcome / **farewells** for chief executives and senior staff members, including but not limited to powhiri ceremonies and other cultural ceremonies and events or parties between 2010 and 2023*
 - *the cost of the event with a full breakdown of costs*
- *Also please send me details of cost of welcomes/farewells for those in Canterbury, Nelson and Wellington in particular*

In order to provide you with this information on chief executives and senior staff members between 2010 to 2023, the Ministry would need to divert personnel from their core duties and allocate extra time to complete this task. The diversion of these resources would impair the Ministry's ability to continue standard operations and would be an inefficient use of the Ministry's resources.

As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act as it would require substantial collation. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

However, a recent response to a Written Parliamentary Question (WPQ) identified costs relating to 12 tier 1 and 2 staff members, previously based at National Office. Some of these events were for long-serving staff members (e.g., over 30 years' service with the Ministry). You can find this information at the following link: www.parliament.nz/en/pb/order-paper-questions/written-questions/document/WQ_25164_2023/25164-2023-david-seymour-to-the-minister-for-social.

In the spirit of being helpful we have enclosed **Table One** from the published WPQ, which shows the total spend by the Ministry on welcome and farewell events for tier 1 and 2 staff since 2017, broken down by staff member, position, event type and breakdown of costs.

Table One: Staff member and their position tier, broken down by staff member, position, event type and breakdown of costs.

Staff Member Name	Role (Tier 1 or Tier 2)	Event Type (Welcome /Farewell)	Total Cost	Breakdown of Costs
Andrea Lawton	Tier 2	Welcome	\$1400.71	Catering/Venue/Equipment
Brendan Boyle	Tier 1	Farewell	\$6366.58	Catering/Venue/Equipment
Carolyn Risk	Tier 2	Farewell	\$397.75	Catering/Venue/Equipment
Debbie Power	Tier 1	Powhiri	\$963.86	Catering/Venue/Equipment
Emma Speight	Tier 2	Farewell	\$1711.83	Catering/Venue/Equipment
Liz Jones	Tier 2	Retirement	\$2335.16	Catering/Venue/Equipment
Marc Warner	Tier 2	Farewell	\$1504.42	Catering/Venue/Equipment
Nic Blakeley	Tier 2	Farewell	\$400.52	Catering/Venue/Equipment
Stephen Crombie	Tier 2	Farewell	\$713.91	Catering/Venue/Equipment
Viv Rickard	Tier 2	Powhiri	\$508.88	Catering/Venue/Equipment

Notes:

- The data has been extracted by using specific search terms (farewell, welcomes, powhiri) and therefore may be incomplete.
- Costs have not been broken down as they are captured centrally under catering, venue, and equipment costs.
- Tier 1 and 2 staff members are Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive.
- Additional time would be required to provide a detailed breakdown of the costs, which will involve staff having to locate individual invoices dating back to 2017.

You may also find it helpful to know that as part of the Annual Review process, the Ministry routinely answers a question on how much *"was spent on internal conferences and seminars, staff retreats, offsite training, or planning and teambuilding exercises, including travel costs, and what is the purpose of each"*?

Each year the Ministry organises a Leadership Summit and Regional Forums across New Zealand for the Leadership Team to connect with senior managers, staff, and stakeholders.

The Regional Forums connect the Leadership Team with staff and stakeholders located across New Zealand. It is a priority for the Ministry's Leadership Team to engage with its staff and with stakeholders located across its 13 regions. The forums enable the Leadership Team to meet with around 1,500 staff and

run workshops on the Ministry's strategic direction, housing, employment, Partnering and supporting Ministry staff to help New Zealanders.

The Ministry reports annually in the Annual Review on these events and their associated costs. This information is published and is publicly available. The latest published Annual Review is for the 2021/22 financial year and is found on the Parliamentary website. Please see question 101 on page 84: www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/53SCSS_EVI_127528_SS5240/5bb09bc1a83e5bd3396f8d0b9f92fb86e85e984d.

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



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