



11 January 2024

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 22 November 2023, requesting information about the Ministry of Social Development's (the Ministry) use of vehicles, taxis, and ride-sharing applications.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on each part of your request set out separately below.

1. What was the department's Taxi expenditure for the 2022/23 financial year?

The Ministry's expenditure on taxis for the 2022/2023 financial year was \$780,298.26 (excluding tax). You can find the expenditure for previous years on page 81 of the following link: www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/53SCSS_EVI_127528_SS5240/5bb09bc1a83e5bd3396f8d0b9f92fb86e85e984d

2. What was the department's expenditure on ridesharing apps (such as Uber, Ola, Zoomy, YourRide etc) for the 2022/23 financial year?
a. If the agency does not separate out taxi expenditure from other ride sharing expenditure, please indicate whether ridesharing or taxi use is the default/most common when such a service is needed and provide and a rough estimate of the proportion of trips that are taken via ridesharing vs taxi

In June 2023, The Ministry undertook an initial trial of Uber, with a small pool of users to test the viability of it's corporate services. This trial was successful, and a wider trial is underway in this financial year, which allows staff to choose between Uber or other options such as public transport or Taxis, depending on their needs. the Ministry's expenditure for Uber in the 2022/23 financial year was \$244.54 (excluding tax).

3. What was the department's expenditure on public transport (busses, trains, ferries, etc) for the 2022/23 financial year?

The Ministry does not centrally record travel costs relating to public transport. In order to provide you with this information, 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, requires 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 requests 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, it should be noted that spending on travel and accommodation 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, or using discounted fares and retaining flexibility on return travel.

We consider you may find the Ministry's 2023 Annual Report which is publicly available and provides the travel expenses for the financial year 2022/2023 at page 151. You can find the annual report at the following link: www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/corporate/annual-report/2023/msd-annual-report-2023.pdf.

4. What was the department's other road travel expenditure (running costs of vehicles owned by your agencies, hire cars etc but excluding flights) for the 2022/23 financial year?

Prior to 18 April 2023, the Ministry did not centrally record running costs associated with Ministry owned vehicles and hire cars. In order to provide you with this information, 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, requires 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 requests 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, we can confirm that from 18 April 2023, the Ministry's total amount spent on running costs for Ministry owned vehicles for the financial year 2022/2023 is \$697,720.95 (excludes administration management fee).

Please note, as you have not refined this part of your request, the Ministry has interpreted running cost to include maintenance, tyres, fuel, EV public charging and Registrations costs. This does not include hire car figures.

The Ministry's travel expenditure for hire cars for the financial year 2022/2023 was \$358,619.87.

5. Does the department have internal policies banning their staff or advising them against using ride-sharing apps for work travel? If so, what are these policies?

The Ministry does not have internal policies which bans Ministry staff or advises them against using ride-sharing applications for work travel.

6. Does the department have any concerns about their staff using ride-sharing apps for work travel?

7. If the department does not currently use ridesharing, please indicate why not? Similarly, if the department does not use ridesharing as the default over taxis, please indicate why not.

Currently there are no concerns about staff using ride-sharing apps for work travel.

The Ministry's use of Uber is currently going through a two-year trial period. As Uber is not available nationally, and not all Ministry staff can access it, Uber is opt-in for Ministry staff at this stage.

8. Has the department purchased any vehicles over the 2022/2023 financial year? If so, how many were electric, diesel and petrol and what was the cost of these purchases broken down by vehicle type (electric, diesel, petrol)?

During the financial year 2022/2023, 65 electric vehicles were purchased at a total cost of \$3,438,000.

The Ministry has a Fleet Optimisation and Transition Programme in place to meet the Government's mandate for agencies to optimise and transition to their fleets to electric vehicles. The Programme supports the Government's goals for reduced fleet emissions.

9. What is the running cost of all the department's vehicles?

Please refer to running costs provided for question four.

10. Please provide an estimate on the number of kilometers traveled by staff via land transport in the 2022/23 financial year.

The total number of kilometres travelled by Ministry staff in the 2022/2023 financial year is 5,964,755. Please note that the kilometres provided are inclusive of rental vehicle data and taxi/uber data.

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

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 my decision on your request regarding use of vehicles, taxis, and ride-sharing applications., 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

pp.



Magnus O'Neill
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services