



15 May 2024

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 26 April 2024, requesting the Ministry of Social Development's (the Ministry) spend on contractors and consultants:

- 1. Your organisation's total spend on contractors and consultants from 1 January 2018 – present, broken down by quarter (including Q1 2024). I hope this information will already be compiled due to the Public Service Commission's regular reporting of these figures since 2018, as mentioned [here](#). Please further break down that spend by business group (or equivalent organisational unit), with all figures provided in a spreadsheet in the following format:*

	Q1 2018	Q2 2018	Q3 2018	Q4 2018	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q4 2019	Q1 2020
Business Group X	\$XXX,XXX	\$XXX,XXX	\$XXX,XXX	\$XXX,XXX	\$XXX,XXX	\$XXX,XXX	\$XXX,XXX	\$XXX,XXX	\$XXX,XXX
Business Group Y	\$XXX,XXX	\$XXX,XXX	\$XXX,XXX	\$XXX,XXX	\$XXX,XXX	\$XXX,XXX	\$XXX,XXX	\$XXX,XXX	\$XXX,XXX
Business Group Z	\$XXX,XXX	\$XXX,XXX	\$XXX,XXX	\$XXX,XXX	\$XXX,XXX	\$XXX,XXX	\$XXX,XXX	\$XXX,XXX	\$XXX,XXX

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

We do not hold the information in the format, and detail, requested

The Ministry does not hold information on total spend on contractors and consultants in the format, and the detail, you have requested.

In order to provide you with this information, the Ministry would need to divert personnel from their core duties and allocate extra time to create this information in this format, and level of specificity. 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 collusion. 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.

We can provide you with other relevant information which meets the public interest in this expenditure

However, to address the public interest in releasing information about this type of expenditure, I refer you to the parliament website, where the Ministry regularly submits evidence to Select Committees as part of Parliament's financial scrutiny processes, including Annual Review.

Parliament's Annual Review process looks at the Ministry's performance in the previous financial year, i.e. year ending 30 June, and scrutinises and reports on the outcomes achieved through funding it administers. This process is initiated by the Ministry's presentation of its Annual Report.

You will find the Ministry's Annual Review submissions for the financial years 2017/18 through to 2022/23, on the Parliament website. Each year's submission provides information on the current year under review, compared to the previous five financial years.

You can find the latest submission for the 2022/23 financial year at the following link: www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/54SCSSC_EVI_b9ae0553-7cfa-4166-4a99-08dbfb701e36_SSC555/73b1dabf5be7391633b0cebc1ca4e31eef4b1efb. For ease of reference, I suggest looking at question 68 on page 63.

I also recommending looking at Appendix 9 of the Annual Review providing further breakdown of contractors and consultants. Appendix 9 can be found at the following link: www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/54SCSSC_EVI_b9ae0553-7cfa-4166-4a99-08dbfb701e36_SSC553/dac493d3ddb4fb57042dbb31968a12ec956c7f1d.

I note you are also requesting current information on the Ministry's spend on contractors and consultants. The Public Service Commission Te Kawa Mataaho (PSC) publishes quarterly information about the amount of spend on contractors and consultants across the Public Service. The information for the March quarter, as part of the 2023/24 financial year will be published by PSC soon, as such, I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(d) of the Act.

However, you can find the most recent figures for contractor and consultant spend for the 2023/24 financial year (to 31 December 2023), at the following link: www.publicservice.govt.nz/research-and-data/workforce-data-public-sector-composition/workforce-data-workforce-size#:~:text=There%20were%2065%2C699%20full-time,indicative%20of%20year-end%20results.

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, 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Magnus', written over a light grey grid background.

Magnus O'Neill
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services