



Dear

On 27 July 2017, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information regarding the Ministry's expenditure on communications:

- *The amount spent on all external communications by the Ministry every calendar year since 2005. Please include a yearly breakdown. Please include the budget for 2017.*
- *The number of communications staff hired by the Ministry every calendar year since 2005. Please include a yearly breakdown. Please include all staff that deal with the media both directly and indirectly. Please include all staff that deal with communication strategies.*
- *The amount spent on all communications staff every year since 2005. Please include a yearly breakdown. Please include the budget for 2017.*

The information you have requested is captured in annual reporting the Ministry completes for the Social Services Select Committee. The information the Ministry provides is publically available through the Parliamentary website.

The Ministry's submissions in response to the Social Services Committee Annual Review of the Ministry of Social Development - Standard Pre-hearing Questions, and the Standard Estimates Questionnaire for Vote Social Development, as well as the Ministry's responses to Financial Review questions, and the reports of the Social Services Committee on these submissions, are available on the New Zealand Parliament website.

You can search the Parliamentary website by Select Committee, and type of document. For submissions and advice use the search function here: www.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/submissions-and-advice/, and for reports, the search function here: www.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/reports/.

Each submission or report contains information about some prior years also. For your quick reference, please find the below web-links to the key documents that address the time period your request spans.

The 2017/18 Estimates for Vote Social Development are available here: www.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/business-before-committees/document/FINS_74238/201718-estimates-for-vote-social-development.

The most recent Annual Review Pre-Hearing Questions submission is available here: www.parliament.nz/resource/mi-NZ/51SCSS_EVI_00DBSCH_ANR_71778_1_A542_337/2c251d89da49fd38264eabee9821e004de7b98e7. The section titled 'Advertising, Polling, And Public Relations' is the area that is likely to be of interest to you. This section begins on page 28.

The Standard Estimates Question for the 2011/12 year is available here: www.parliament.nz/resource/mi-NZ/49SCSS_EVI_00DBSCH_EST_10697_1_A19435_4/8d5289b3dc59fff19d55963144e88924f1b25243 and contains information for the 2010/11 and 2009/10 financial years.

The responses to the 2008/09 Financial Review questions, available here: www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/49SCSS_EVI_00DBSCH_FIN_9466_1_A21782/8b02b20a6c5e0584a8898e14445926be184bb41f contains the information back to the 2005/06 financial year.

You requested information about staff that deal with the media indirectly. Many staff employed by the Ministry may, from time to time, deal with the media indirectly. This indirect involvement is largely through participation in the formation of a response to media queries. For instance, subject matter experts or staff members local to the area of media interest may be consulted, or asked for further information. To ascertain the number of staff who may have been involved in such a process in any given year, 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 Official Information Act, as providing this information 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.

You may be interested in the Treasury's sixth annual report on the cost, efficiency and effectiveness of administrative and support services across 26 public sector agencies, including the Ministry of Social Development, is available online here: www.treasury.govt.nz/statesector/performance/bass/benchmarking. Previous years reports are available here: www.treasury.govt.nz/statesector/performance/bass/benchmarking/archive. As you will note, the reports include a section titled 'Communications and external relations (excluding the publications function)'.

5) *Is there a Ministry policy on how much is spent on external communications? if so, how has the policy changed since 2005?*

The Ministry allocates budget each year for its communications activity. The expectation is that communications activity is delivered within this budget allocation, using the internal communications resource. Occasionally, external communications

resource is required, and this is usually met within existing baselines. This has been the Ministry's policy since 2005.

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 shortly. 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 regarding the Ministry's communication spend 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.

Yours sincerely



Elisabeth Brunt
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