



6 May 2026

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 29 April 2026, requesting information about the Ministry's policy on the release of staff's information in Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) requests.

I have considered your request under the OIA. Please find my decision on your request set out below.

Please find attached a copy of information about how staff names will be considered for release in OIA requests. The information on the page is applicable to staff names, job titles, and contact details.

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

pp.

Anna Graham
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services

Release of staff names in OIA requests

Here you will find information about how staff names will be considered for release in Official Information Act 1982 requests. The information on this page is applicable to staff names, job titles, and contact details.

On this Page:

Requests

A staff's name, job title and contact details may be released in response to an Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request. However, each request is carefully assessed before a decision is made.

The [Ombudsman has guidelines](https://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/resources/names_and_contact_details_public_sector_employees) [https://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/resources/names_and_contact_details_public_sector_employees] about the release of staff names under the OIA. The general position is 'release unless'. This means there is usually no reason to withhold a staff name, and it should be released when requested under the OIA.

However, withholding staff names may be justified in particular circumstances. There is often a high threshold that needs to be met. The Official Information team carefully assesses every request on a case-by-case basis.

There are two situations where a staff name may be requested: (1) it is specifically requested (a direct request); or (2) it is otherwise within the scope of the requested information - which is where the name happens to be included in documents, emails or other information that has been requested (an indirect request). Each situation is approached as follows:

(1) Direct request: the staff name is specifically requested

In this situation, the requestor is clearly seeking release of the staff name.

The request will be assessed in line with the assessment steps explained below.

The Official Information team *may consider consulting* with the requestor to understand to reasons for the request (noting that reasons do not have to be provided). This step is not required and will only be taken where there is benefit in doing so.

(2) Indirect request: the staff name falls within the scope of the requested information

In this situation, it is not clear whether the requestor is seeking release of the staff name.

When acknowledging the request, the Official Information team will send the following clarification to the requestor:

'The information you have requested may contain the names and contact details of our staff. Please let us know by [2 working days] whether you require these names and contact details. We will need to consult our staff before deciding whether we can release this information, and this will take a bit more time. If we do not hear from you, we will assume that you do not require staff names and contact details.'

If the requestor confirms that the staff name *is not required*, then the information will be marked 'out of scope' of the request, and *not released*.

If the requestor *does not reply* to the clarification request, then the staff name will be marked 'out of scope' of the request, and *not released*.

If the requestor confirms that the staff name *is required*, then the information will be assessed in line with the assessment steps explained below.

Assessment

Minimising harm and risk to our staff is important. The Official Information team undertake assessments carefully and with affected staff (usually through their manager), in accordance with the standard [assessment template](https://doogue.ssi.govt.nz/business_groups/people_culture_strategy/maes/oi_team.html) [https://doogue.ssi.govt.nz/business_groups/people_culture_strategy/maes/oi_team.html].

The assessment step is the opportunity for staff to raise any concerns about the release of their name, including concerns about how it may impact their family.

A staff name may be withheld for the following reasons:

(1) Risk to staff safety - section 6(d) of the OIA

Section 6(d) of the OIA may apply if the release of the staff name *'would be likely...to endanger the safety of any person'*.

In assessing the application of this withholding ground, the Official Information team will look for evidence such as actual threats, or facts supporting a reasonable perception of a threat (e.g. a history of violence or abuse by the requester).

(2) Improper pressure or harassment - section 9(2)(g)(ii) of the OIA

Section 9(2)(g)(ii) of the OIA may apply if withholding the staff name is *'necessary to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs...through the protection of [Ministry staff] from improper pressure or harassment'*.

In assessing the application of this withholding ground, the Official Information team will look for evidence to support the expected harm, such as aggressive or abusive language, offensive, derogatory or defamatory remarks; or deliberate misrepresentation of the facts; or a pattern of behaviour directed at a person like following them or giving them offensive material, including publishing it on the internet.

This section is subject to a countervailing public interest test, which means the staff name could still be released if there are stronger transparency or accountability reasons for doing so.

(3) Intrusion on the personal privacy of staff - section 9(2)(a) of the OIA

Section 9(2)(a) of the OIA may apply if withholding the staff name is *'necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons'*.

In assessing the application of this withholding ground, the Official Information team will consider whether the release of the name would reveal something private or personal about the staff (when connected to other information); or would intrude on their privacy such as affecting their wellbeing or reputation (including that of their family).

This section is subject to a countervailing public interest test, which means the staff name could still be released if there are stronger transparency or accountability reasons for doing so.

Decision

Decisions on OIA requests are made by the General Manager for Ministerial and Executive Services.

Following the assessment, if there is not a reason to withhold a staff name, the Official Information team will inform the staff (usually through their manager). The information will then be released to the requestor.

Following the assessment, if there is a reason to withhold a staff name, it will be withheld or redacted from the other information being released.

Where there are good reasons to withhold a staff name, the Official Information team will try to retain as much of the surrounding information in the documents as possible. Position titles, role descriptions, and programme or team names can provide additional meaning for requesters.

Ordinarily, job titles will be released to the requestor where staff names are withheld or marked 'out of scope'.

Most responses to OIA requests are published on the Ministry's website.

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