

6 July 2020

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Dear Dr Robert Shaw

I refer to your email of 13 June 2020 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

*"The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) continues to be a positive arrangement for New Zealand trade. After it was signed, and later, there was talk of China joining the CPTPP. They are on the right ocean.*

*Have there been any official overtures regarding China becoming a partner, have New Zealand officials ever met other officials to discuss this, has the New Zealand government ever done anything to indicate openness to the inclusion of China? If so, what detail might you provide and might you list any policy papers which pertain? What practical steps might New Zealand take to advance the entry of China into the CPTPP?"*

On the matter of CPTPP accession in general, New Zealand is on public record as having, from the outset, been an advocate of expanding the value of CPTPP through accession, and welcoming interest from economies that are committed to meeting the Agreement's high standards.

The process for accession was agreed by all CPTPP members at the first CPTPP Commission, held in Tokyo, in January 2019. Details on this process are publically available, including on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade website here: <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/CPTPP/Accession-Process.pdf>

Regarding China, we note there has been no formal expression of interest to date in acceding to the CPTPP. Neither have there been any meetings on this specific matter.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details redacted) may be published on the Ministry's website.

You have the right under section 28(3) of the OIA to seek a review of this response by the Ombudsman.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Julie-Anne Lee', with a horizontal line underneath.

Julie-Anne Lee  
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade