

Office of Hon Chris Hipkins

MP for Remutaka

Minister for COVID-19 Response

Minister of Education

Minister for the Public Service

Leader of the House



2 July 2021

Mr Jake Pollock

<mailto:jake.pollock@gmail.com>

fyi-request-15391-04437b19@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Pollock

Official Information Request

I refer to your official information request dated 7 May 2021 for:

“information held by Minister Hipkins' office on the public sector pay freeze, including any advice received by the minister, communications and records of meetings between the minister and officials regarding the pay freeze, and anything else pertinent to the decision (including who the decision was taken by)”.

On 1 June 2021 we wrote to notify you of an extension of the time to make our decision, to **2 July 2021**. The extension was necessary because your request captures a large quantity of information and consultation with a number of parties was needed to make a decision on your request, therefore a proper response could not reasonably meet the original time limit.

Information being released

On 5 May 2021, following a Cabinet decision on 12 April 2021, I issued a [Government Workforce Policy Statement](#) (Workforce Policy) setting out the Government's expectations of how it wants the Public Service and most other public sector agencies to effectively manage employment relations.

The Workforce Policy sets out the Government's expectation that the Public Service is an exemplar employer, one which uses modern, progressive employment practices, and is a great place to work. It also wants a productive unified workforce which is grounded in the spirit of service.

To achieve these goals, the Workforce Policy has four key workforce priorities:

- Employ people fairly, equitably and in a way that allows them to live good lives and participate in the economy.
- Work collaboratively with unions and other groups to achieve shared goals.
- Create an inclusive environment for all workers with the aim of achieving a diverse workforce.
- Achieve the goals within the fiscal context of the Government.

The final priority is particularly important in the COVID-19 environment and the public sector needs to be mindful of the fiscal context the Government is operating in.

With these fiscal conditions continuing, the Government has been clear that pay restraint needs to continue to be exercised across the Public Service for the foreseeable future.

To help agencies to give effect to the Government’s expectation of pay restraint, the Public Service Commissioner issued [Public Service Pay Guidance](#) to Public Service agencies on how he expects they will approach these matters. He has asked other public sector organisations to take the same approach.

Please find listed in the table below reports and advice that I received that relates to the Government Workforce Policy Statement and the Public Service Pay Guidance that was announced and released on 5 May 2021.

We will be publishing these documents on Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission’s website and providing you with the link to the location by **8 July 2021**.

Item	Report Number	Document Description
1	SSC2020/0057	REPORT: Managing remuneration pressures in the State Services
2	2020/0161	JOINT REPORT: Update on the State Sector Employment Relations Environment – September 2020
3	2021/0025	Update on Government Workforce Policy Statement
4	2021/0087	REPORT: Approval of the Government Workforce Policy Statement on employment relations and timing of release
5	2020/0201	REPORT: Information release of the 2020 Workforce Data
6	2021/0044	AIDE MEMOIRE: Oral item: Pay Restraint in the Public Sector
7	2021/0021	REPORT: Updated Employment Relations Expectations: Government Workforce Policy Statement (GWPS) for the public sector
8	Not applicable	CABINET PAPER: Government Workforce Policy Statement
9	CAB-21-MIN-0103	MINUTE: Government Workforce Policy Statement for the Public Sector
10	SWC-21-MIN-0039	MINUTE: Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee Minute of Decision – Government Workforce Policy Statement for the Public Sector

I have decided to release the relevant parts of the documents listed above, subject to information being withheld under one or more of the following sections of the OIA, as applicable:

- 9(2)(a) - to the protect the privacy of natural persons,
- 9(2)(f)(iv) – to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials
- 9(2)(g)(i) – to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any public service agency in the course of their duty
- 9(2)(j) – enable a Minister of the Crown or any public service agency or organisation holding the information to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations).

In addition, some information has been deleted where it is not within the scope of your request.

Please find listed in the table below reports and advice that also comes within scope of your request, that we have decided to withhold in full under the following sections of the OIA:

- 9(2)(g)(i) - to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any public service agency in the course of their duty
- 9(2)(j) - to enable a Minister of the Crown or any public service agency or organisation holding the information to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations).

Item	Report Number	Document Description
11	SSC2020/0078	JOINT REPORT: Ministerial Oversight Group on State Sector Employment Relations
12	SSC2020/0087	Joint SSC/Treasury Aide Memoire: MOGSSER Meeting of 7 May 2020
13	SSC2020/0108	REPORT: June MOGSSER papers
14	2020/0202	JOINT REPORT: Ministerial Oversight Group on State Sector Employment Relations (MOGSSER)
15	2021/0054	REPORT: 14 April Papers for the Ministerial Oversight Group on State Sector Employment Relations MOGSSER
16	2021/0066	JOINT REPORT: Context for potential inclusion of "middle earners: within expectations of public sector pay restraint
17	2021/0022	JOINT REPORT: 17 February 2021 Papers for the Ministerial Oversight Group on State Sector Employment Relations (MOGSSER).

Please find listed in the table below reports and advice that also come within scope of your request and are already publicly available on Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission's website [here](#).

Item	Report Number	Document Description
18	SSC2020/0005	REPORT: Labour Cost Index (LCI) Results – December 2019 quarter
19	SSC2020/0070	AIDE MEMOIRE: Pay restraint talking points for CBC meeting
20	SSC2020/0074	REPORT: Amendment to the Remuneration Authority Act 1977
21	SSC2020/0079	REPORT: Pay restraint in the public sector - Remuneration Authority (COVID 19) Bill
22	2020/0155	REPORT: Labour costs index results - June 2020
23	2020/0196	REPORT: September Quarter LCI
24	2021/0013	REPORT: Labour Cost Index Results - December 2020
25	SSC2020/0005	REPORT: Labour Cost Index (LCI) Results – December 2019 quarter

Also, publicly available [here](#) on the Beehive website are copies of my Ministerial Diary. Accordingly, I have refused your request for the documents listed in the above table, and details of my meeting records under section 18(d) of the OIA on the grounds the information requested is publicly available.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to Christina Connolly
Christina.Connolly@parliament.govt.nz

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'CH', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chris Hipkins
Minister for the Public Service