

24 January 2023

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OIA 28362

Tēnā koe Scott

I refer to your email of 25 October 2022 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

*I would like to make a request for copies of three reviews referred to in MFAT's 2022 Annual Report:*

*ONE: On page 44, an internal exercise relating to the COVID-19 response is referred to:*

*"The Ministry also conducted an exercise to identify lessons from the Ministry's contribution to the All-of-Government COVID-19 response in the period June 2020 to June 2022. The exercise was an opportunity to reflect on the Ministry-wide coordination, coherence, and operational issues that would be relevant should we need to undertake a similar response in future."*

*I would like to request a copy of whatever report was produced to summarise the outcomes of this exercise.*

*TWO: On page 37 an internal review of consular service is referred to:*

*"The Ministry has made substantial progress towards completing the implementation of the changes recommended in the internal evaluation of the Ministry's COVID-19 consular response, including the introduction to the House of a legislative amendment to regularise the provision of consular loans where required."*

*I would like to request a copy of this internal evaluation.*

*THREE: On page 49 a review of MFAT governance is referred to:*

*"The Ministry initiated a review of its Governance Framework in March 2022 to assure senior leaders that fit-for-purpose arrangements were in place for effective governance. The review provided an opportunity to improve the efficiency of delivery and to ensure clarity of purpose."*

On 22 November 2022, we advised that the timeframes for responding to your request were extended by 30 working days to 24 January 2023. Thank you for your patience.

The information relevant to your request is attached. Please note the 'Lessons from the COVID-19 Response' document is in scope of your first two queries, while 'Governance Review – Report to Board' is in scope of your third query.

We have withheld some information under the following sections of the OIA:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the New Zealand Government;
- 9(2)(a): to protect individuals' privacy;
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments;

Where the information has been withheld under section 9 of the OIA, we have identified no public interest in releasing the information that would override the reasons for withholding it.

Please note that we may publish this letter (with your personal details redacted) and enclosed documents on the Ministry's website.

If you have any questions about this decision, you can contact us by email at: [DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz). You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision by contacting [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Owen Thornber', written over a horizontal line.

Owen Thornber  
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade