



19 December 2022

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Tēnā koe P Taylor

**Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request dated 31 October 2022 (ref OIA 22/23 0346)**

Thank you for your OIA request dated 31 October 2022 to the Department of Internal Affairs (Department). You asked for the following information –

*“Under the Official Information Act 1982, I would like to request all communications between any member of the Department of Internal Affairs Digital Safety Team and the London Institute for Strategic Dialogue during the period of 01 August 2022 and 30 September 2022.”*

On 28 November 2022, we informed you of our decision to extend the time to respond to your OIA request by 15 working days. This made the new due date for your OIA response to be on 19 December 2022.

**Principle of availability**

The guiding principle for considering your request for official information is the principle of availability (section 5 of the OIA). That is, information must be made available on request unless there is good reason for withholding it. “Good reason” for withholding is provided for in the OIA and it is against this framework that we considered whether to withhold official information in this case.

**Response to your request**

We have located **nine documents** within scope of your request. These documents are listed in the table below and are attached to this letter as **Appendix A**.

Where it is necessary, we are relying on grounds listed under section 9(2) of the OIA. The grounds under section 9 are subject to the public interest test in section 9(1). The particular grounds in question are as follows:

- Section 9(2)(g)(i) – the withholding of the information is necessary to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions between officers and employees; and
- Section 9(2)(g)(ii) – the withholding of the information is necessary to protect officers and employees from improper pressure or harassment

Under section 9(2)(g)(i), we are withholding documents 5,7 and 9 in full as these constitute draft reports and the release of these documents would inhibit the free and frank expressions between ISD and other officials in future and, in turn, would prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs. A summary of these reports will be made available to you by 20 January 2023.

Under section 9(2)(g)(ii), we are withholding the contact details (names, roles, phone numbers and email addresses) of officials and staff and any information that would reveal the identities of the staff in documents 1,2,3,4,6 and 8 to protect them from improper pressure or harassment in order to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs.

The withholding of this information under sections 9(2)(g)(i) and 9(2)(g)(ii) is not outweighed by other public interest considerations which render it desirable to make this information available. Therefore, sections 9(2)(g)(i) and 9(2)(g)(ii) constitute good reasons for withholding in this particular case.

### **Withholding grounds applicable under section 6 of the OIA**

The Department has considered the conclusive reasons for withholding information that are not subject to the public interest test, listed in section 6 of the OIA. The particular grounds in question are as follows:

- Section 6(a) – where the making available of the information would be likely to prejudice the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand; and
- Section 6(c) – where the making available of the information would be likely to prejudice the maintenance of the law, including the prevention, investigation, and detection of offences, and the right to a fair trial.

The release of the redacted information in documents 3 and 4 would likely prejudice the security of New Zealand under section 6(a) of the OIA. In particular, the release of this information would be likely to undermine the Department's operations and, in turn, detrimentally impact on the nation's security.

The release of the redacted information in documents 3 and 4 would likely prejudice the maintenance of the law under section 6(c) of the OIA. In particular, it would jeopardise our ability to gather relevant information for future operations.

### **Access to the Ombudsman**

If you are dissatisfied with our decision on your request for information, you have the right, under section 28 of the OIA, to make a complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman. The Office of the Ombudsman can be contacted by phone on 0800 802 602, via post at PO Box 10152 Wellington, or via email to [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz).

Ngā mihi



**Jared Mullen**  
Director Digital Safety

## Appendix A

Document number	Title	Date	Comments
1.	Email correspondence between DIA and ISD on review for briefing	17/09/2022 – 20/09/2022	Released, but with some information withheld under section 9(2)(g)(ii), 6(a) and 6(c) of the OIA.
2.	Email correspondence between DIA and ISD notifying several documents requested under OIA	23/08/2022 – 25/08/2022	Released, but with some information withheld under section 9(2)(g)(ii) of the OIA.
3.	Email correspondence between DIA and ISD acknowledging receipt of draft report	4/08/2022 – 1/09/2022	Released, but with some information withheld under sections 9(2)(g)(ii), 6(a) and 6(c) of the OIA.
4.	Email correspondence between DIA and ISD noting changes made in draft report (1 attachment)	4/08/2022 – 15/08/2022	Released, but with some information withheld under sections 9(2)(g)(ii), 6(a) and 6(c) of the OIA.
5.	<i>Attachment: Draft ISD report titled 'Understanding the long tail of online extremism in New Zealand'</i>	No date	Withheld in full under 9(2)(g)(i)
6.	Email from ISD requesting feedback on draft report (1 attachments)	17/09/2022	Released, but with some information withheld under section 9(2)(g)(ii) of the OIA.
7.	<i>Attachment: Draft ISD report titled 'NZ Online Extremism: International Influences'</i>	No date	Withheld in full under 9(2)(g)(i)
8.	Email from ISD requesting feedback on draft report (1 attachment)	4/08/2022	Released, but with some information withheld under section 9(2)(g)(ii) of the OIA.
9.	<i>Attachment: Draft ISD report titled 'Understanding the Long Tail of Extremism in New Zealand'</i>	No date	Withheld in full under 9(2)(g)(i)