



NEW ZEALAND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE



New Zealand Ministry of
Foreign Affairs and Trade
Manatū Aotearoa

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Jackson Wood
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Dear Jackson Wood

I refer to your email of 2 November 2015 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

"... I would like to request any and all documents, correspondence, advice, or information the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and trade has prepared, sent, or received on, or about, Pandas since 1 January 2010.

Of specific importance would be any documents, correspondence, advice or information prepared for, sent to, or received from: the Prime Minister and/or his office, Wellington City Council, the Minister of Defence and/or his office, and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

I would also like to be provided with answers to the following questions:

- 1) At any time since November 2008 has MFAT been involved in any negotiations with the Chinese Government relating to Pandas?*
- 2) Has MFAT been consulted by any of the following about obtaining Pandas:
- the Prime Minister
- the Prime Minister's office
- the Minister of Defence
- the Minister of Defence's office, or
- the Wellington City Council*
- 3) Does MFAT have a policy so-called "Panda Diplomacy"?*
- 4) What possible implications are there for New Zealand's foreign policy in pursuing Pandas for a New Zealand zoo?"*

Attached are the documents relevant to your request. Some portions of the documents are withheld under the following sections of the OIA:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the international relations of the Government of New Zealand;

- 6(b): to protect the passing of information from another government on a confidential basis;
- 9(2)(a) to protect individuals' privacy;
- 9(2)(ba): to protect the supply of confidential information by a third party;
- s9(2)(f)(iv) - to protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials;
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments; and
- 9(2)(j): to avoid prejudice to negotiations.

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

In addition to the documents noted above, a reporting cable from the New Zealand Embassy in Beijing has been identified as coming within scope of your request. This cable has been withheld in its entirety under sections 6(a) and 6(b) of the OIA, although I am able to advise that the cable, reporting on the Prime Minister's July 2010 visit to Beijing, noted that the Prime Minister made a request for two pandas during a meeting with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao.

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

Yours sincerely



Jane Coombs
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade