

20 December 2019

Valerie Morse  
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Dear Valerie Morse

I refer to your email of 24 November 2019 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

*"I am requesting any information held by MFAT relating to China's detention of Uyghurs, in particular, but not limited to, any information relating to Australia's suspension of its human rights technical assistance programme."*

I am advised that a large volume and type of documents is potentially within scope of your request, as it is currently framed, and would need to be retrieved and reviewed. There is a possibility that the information you are seeking in your request will require substantial collation and research to compile.

To expedite a response to you, attached is some information that has been previously released under the OIA which covers the topics specified in your request. Some portions of the documents remain withheld 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;
- 6(b): to protect the passing of information from another government on a confidential basis;
- 9(2)(a): to protect individuals' privacy;
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments; and
- 9(2)(g)(ii): to protect officers and employees from improper pressure or harassment.

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

For the part of your request relating to Australia's suspension of its human rights technical assistance programme, the Ministry does not hold any information on this topic.

Once you have reviewed the enclosed material, we invite you to submit a more refined OIA request if you wish.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details redacted) and enclosed documents 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 black ink, appearing to be 'W. Adams', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Wendy Adams  
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade