

15 November 2021

Lobby New Zealand
fyi-request-16284-d6045598@requests.fyi.org.nz

195 Lambton Quay
Private Bag 18-901
Wellington 6160
New Zealand

T +64 4 439 8000
F +64 4 472 9596

OIA 27621

Tēnā koe Lobby New Zealand

I refer to your email of 4 August 2021 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

We are seeking all information about, and all communications with, any individual or group from any United Nations organisation, in regards to the recent transfer of a COVID-19 case to New Zealand.

Specifically, as to whether any of these communications altered the view of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade or contradicted the advice given from other ministries, including the Ministry of Health.

On 1 September 2021, the deadline for your request was extended to 13 October 2021, when you were advised the Ministry had made a decision on your request, and the information was in the final stages of preparation to be sent to you as soon as possible. We take seriously our obligations under the OIA. However, the Ministry's management of a range of priorities, including the all-of-government response to COVID-19 and the recent surge of staff to support New Zealand visa-holders seeking to leave Afghanistan, had meant this has been particularly challenging recently. We appreciate your patience while this process was being completed.

Please find attached information relevant to your request. 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;
- 6(b)(ii): to protect the passing of information from an international organisation on a confidential basis;
- 9(2)(a): to protect individuals' privacy; and
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments.

Some information has been withheld in full under section 6(b)(ii) of the OIA to protect the passing of information from an international organisation on a confidential basis.

Included in the information released to you is a comment that a text message was sent by the Ministry's Chief Executive, Chris Seed, to the United Nations Resident Coordinator (UNRC) in Suva. However, I am advised this information is incorrect and that no text was sent, nor was there any communication between the Chief Executive and the UNRC.

Where 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.

If you have any questions about this decision, you can contact us by email at: 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 or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā



Julie-Anne Lee
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade