



CABINET OFFICE

6 May 2022

Lance Watson
fyi-request-19057-6d961fac@requests.fyi.org.nz

Ref: OIA-2021/22-1212

Tēnā koe Lance Watson

Official Information Act request: Historical Cabinet Minutes

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received on 5 April 2022. You requested:

"I understand Cabinet Minutes are generally classified unless released by someone with the appropriate authority.

- 1. How far back do you hold historical cabinet minutes?*
- 2. How would you make decisions about releasing historical cabinet minutes? e.g. If all the Ministers of a historical cabinet are deceased or long since retired, would that impact your decision on the release of minutes?*
- 3. I understand your website has a "publications" section, unfortunately that's dated based on when something is released, is there a chronological list of cabinet meetings that have had minutes released?"*

Under the Public Records Act 2005, every public office must transfer from its possession and control public records that have been in existence for 25 years to Archives New Zealand and the control of the Chief Archivist. The Cabinet Office currently holds Cabinet minutes as far back as 2006 and earlier Cabinet minutes are held at Archives New Zealand which go back as far as the nineteenth century.

While the Cabinet Office holds records of Cabinet material, decisions for the release of historic Cabinet minutes typically rest with the government department responsible for the portfolio associated with the minutes.

The release of Cabinet minutes depends on a range of factors such the nature of material, its age, the sensitivity of the content, and considerations under the Official Information Act 1982 and the Privacy Act 2020. It is not determined by whether a Minister is deceased or long retired, as former Ministers do not retain decision-making over the release of official information. Material deposited by government organisations with Archives New Zealand will also be classified as either open access or restricted access.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET

Te Tari o te Pirimia me te Komiti Matua

Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6011, New Zealand. Telephone: +64 (4) 830 5010.

Email: CabinetOffice@dpmc.govt.nz www.dpmc.govt.nz

We recommend contacting Archives New Zealand directly for assistance to access historical Cabinet minutes: [Archives New Zealand](#)

In response to part 3 of your request, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's website publishes a diverse range of information. However, this does not include a chronological list of Cabinet minutes as Ministers and government departments are responsible for publishing their own Cabinet material.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

We do not intend to publish this response on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's website.

Nāku noa, nā



Michael Webster
Secretary of the Cabine