

27 May 2022

Sebastian  
[fyi-request-19388-d9d9d38e@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-19388-d9d9d38e@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 28073

Tēnā koe Sebastian

I refer to your email of 19 May 2022 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

*I would like to make a request for information regarding the temporary closure of the New Zealand Consulate-General in Chengdu, China. The closure was announced on 25 March 2020 on the MFAT website, here: <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/media-and-resources/new-zealand-consulate-general-in-chengdu-temporarily-closes-due-to-covid-19/> I would like to request copies of all briefings to the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the topic of this closure, and the consulate's reopening, dated since March 2020. This should include excerpts from the minister's weekly briefings that deal with this topic.*

The information relevant to your request is attached. Part of the information attached is an excerpt of information in scope of your request from a submission of 9 November 2021 to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, titled 'Reprioritising within the offshore post network.' We have withheld some information from this excerpt 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;
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments; and
- 9(2)(f)(iv): to protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials.

Where the 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.

Please note that we may publish this letter (with your personal details redacted) and enclosed document on the Ministry's website.

If you have any questions about this decision, you can contact us by email at: [DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz](mailto: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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā



Julie-Anne Lee  
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade