



**Te Tari Taiwhenua
Internal Affairs**

13 March 2024

Ministerial Services
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Lional Jones
fyi-request-25733-8f3c083c@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Lional Jones

Official Information Act request (OIA 2324-0603)

Thank you for your request for information dated 14 February 2024 made under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Department of Internal Affairs (the Department). You requested the following information:

Dear Department of Internal Affairs,

I note the story announcing the prime minister has directed the amount of funding for ministerial self-drive vehicles has been cut.

I seek all correspondence including emails, text messages, written notes and aide memoires internally within ministerial services, vip transport and DIA, and with the minister responsible for ministerial services regarding developing advice for the policy around ministerial self-drive vehicles for the incoming 2023 government. This is to include (among other subjects) discussion around electric vehicle charging, costs and budget-setting, vehicle standards and evaluation criteria/testing, and supply chain.

I also seek correspondence regarding the process and implementation of returning of ministerial self-drive vehicles from the last out-going government including what is to happen with any taxpayer/DIA funded EV chargers installed in minister's residences.

The request for all correspondence regarding developing advice for the policy around Ministerial self drive vehicles for the incoming 2023 government, is refused under section 18(f) of the Act, that the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

However, working within the spirit of the Act the Department believes that your request can be best responded to by providing full sight of the advice that was provided by the Department to the Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services (MRMS), regarding the changes to the *Ministerial Self-drive Vehicle Selection Policy and Standards* for the incoming 2023 government.

Response to your request

1. I seek all correspondence including emails, text messages, written notes and aide memoires internally within ministerial services, vip transport and DIA, and with the minister responsible for ministerial services regarding developing advice for the policy around ministerial self-drive vehicles for the incoming 2023 government. This is to include (among other subjects) discussion around electric vehicle charging, costs and budget-setting, vehicle standards and evaluation criteria/testing, and supply chain.

The Department provided the MRMS, Rt Hon Christopher Luxon with the briefing *Ministerial Self-Drive Vehicle Selection Policy and Standards* on 27 November 2023. Attached in **Appendix A** is a copy of the briefing signed by Rt Hon Christopher Luxon with his comments and feedback on the advice provided by the Department.

Some information in the briefing has been withheld on the basis of section 9 (2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of natural persons including that of deceased natural persons.

I have considered whether the above grounds for withholding the information under section 9 of the Act are outweighed by other considerations which would make it desirable, in the public interest, to make that information available. In this instance, I do not consider that to be the case.

2. I also seek correspondence regarding the process and implementation of returning of ministerial self-drive vehicles from the last out-going government including what is to happen with any tax-payer/DIA funded EV chargers installed in minister's residences.

Page 4 of the attached briefing (See **Appendix A**) provides advice to the Minister around the reallocation of existing self drive vehicles from outgoing Ministers to incoming Ministers.

EV chargers that have been installed in a Minister's residence as part of their Ministerial self drive entitlement, remain at the property. Due to the limited warranty on the chargers and the requirement to return the property to its original condition such as filling in mounting holes and repainting, it is more cost effective for the charges to stay at the residence.

We may publish this OIA response on www.dia.govt.nz (with your personal details having been removed). Publishing responses to OIA requests increases the availability of information to the public and is consistent with the purpose of the Act to enable effective participation in the making and administration of laws and policies, and to promote the accountability of Ministers and officials.

If you have any concerns with the information in this response, you have a right to request an investigation and review by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Act. Information on how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Briget Ridden
General Manager – Ministerial Services
Te Haumi – Enterprise Partnerships
Te Tari Taiwhenua – The Department of Internal Affairs

Appendix A: MRMS signed copy with comments and feedback of the *Ministerial Self-Drive Vehicle Selection Policy and Standards* briefing.



Ministerial Services briefing

Rt Hon Christopher Luxon
Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services

Title: Ministerial Self-Drive Vehicle Selection Policy and Standards

Date: 27 November 2023

Key issues

Under the *Ministers' Travel Services within New Zealand Determination 2023*, Ministers are entitled to one self-drive vehicle, for use at their discretion.

A *Ministerial Self-Drive Vehicle Selection Policy and Standards* guides the minimum standards and maximum whole-of-life cost for the catalogue of Ministerial self-drive vehicles.

As Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services, you have the discretion to review the *Ministerial Self-drive Vehicle Selection Policy and Standards* at any time, and to confirm the approach to reallocating vehicles or approving exemptions to the policy.

Action sought

Note that under the *Ministers' Travel Services within New Zealand Determination 2023*, Ministers are entitled to one self-drive vehicle for use at their discretion;

Approve the *Ministerial Self-drive Vehicle Selection Policy and Standards* as provided in **Appendix A**;

OR

Advise of any changes required to the *Ministerial Self-drive Vehicle Selection Policy and Standards*;

Agree that where possible, existing Ministerial self drive vehicles from outgoing Ministers will be made available for reallocation to incoming Ministers;

Note that Ministerial Services will work with you on any applicable exemption processes needed in the final *Ministerial Self-drive Vehicle Selection Policy and Standards*; and

Note that Ministerial Services will coordinate the ordering and delivery of Ministerial Self-drive vehicles.

Timeframe

By 8 December 2023

Contact for telephone discussions (if required)

Name	Position	Contact Number	Suggested 1 st contact
Briget Ridden	General Manager, Ministerial Services	9(2)(a)	✓
9(2)(a)	Manager, VIP Transport	9(2)(a)	
Return electronic document to:	Mass.Info@dia.govt.nz		
Cohesion document reference	77ZW3VMNM62-1505002245-284		
Ministerial database reference	MS202300206		

Purpose

1. This briefing seeks your confirmation or advice on changes sought to the *Ministerial Self-drive Vehicle Selection Policy and Standards*, prior to Ministerial Services engaging with Ministers to access their entitlement to a Ministerial Self-drive vehicle.

Ministers' entitlement to self-drive vehicles

2. Under the *Members of Parliament (Remuneration and Services) Act 2013*, the Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services issues the *Ministers' Travel Services within New Zealand Determination*¹. The current Determination was issued by the previous Minister and came into force on 15 October 2023.
3. This Determination sets the entitlements that Members of the Executive have to travel services that are additional or alternative to their entitlements as Members of Parliament.
4. Under clause 2.3 of this Determination:
 - a Minister is entitled to one self drive car for use at the Minister's discretion, i.e. for Ministerial business or for personal reasons. Self-drive vehicles can also be used by other licenced drivers with the Minister's permission, for example a spouse or partner, family members, or Ministerial office staff.
 - the self-drive vehicle will be provided up to a maximum value as agreed with the Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services (currently set at a whole-of-life cost of \$45,000 excluding GST) and may be required to meet minimum standards for fuel economy, environmental sustainability, and safety.
5. For completeness, please note that Parliamentary Under-Secretaries are not entitled to any VIP Transport Services.
6. Ministerial Services, within the Department of Internal Affairs (the Department), is responsible for supporting you to coordinate and manage this entitlement. Vehicles are purchased under Vote Internal Affairs, and ownership is retained by the Department. Day-to-day oversight of the self-drive fleet (including routine servicing, running costs and general maintenance) is managed and funded by VIP Transport within Ministerial Services.

Ministers' use of and responsibility for self-drive vehicles

7. Upon receiving a Ministerial self-drive vehicle, Ministers will be provided with guidelines that describe the expectations for using their self-drive vehicle. In summary, Ministers are responsible for:
 - following the law at all times, and for ensuring all drivers of a self-drive vehicle comply with all elements of the Land Transport Act and other governing legislation. This includes ensuring all drivers have a current valid driver's licence and drive to the conditions of their licence.

¹ <https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/parliamentary-rules/directions-determinations/ministers-travel-services-within-new-zealand-determination-2023/>

- maintaining their self-drive vehicle to a reasonable and tidy standard, and making the vehicle available to VIP Transport for vehicle checks and services every six months.
 - the payment of any fees, tickets and infringements issued as a result of the use of their self-drive vehicle, regardless of who was driving the vehicle at the time.
8. All Ministerial self-drive vehicles are fully insured. All drivers who hold a current full or restricted New Zealand driver's licence, and who comply with the conditions of their licence, are automatically covered by the Department's insurance policy.
 9. In the case of an incident resulting in damage to a self-drive vehicle, Ministers are responsible for advising VIP Transport as soon as practicable. Following an incident, should repair costs not be recoverable under the Department's insurance policy the Minister or the driver may be personally liable. This may include costs resulting from incidents where the driver of the self-drive vehicle is convicted of a driving offence.

Overview of Ministerial Self-drive Vehicle Selection Policy and Standards

10. The Department has prepared a *Ministerial Self-drive Vehicle Selection Policy and Standards* (the Policy) which gives effect to the Determination and guides the process by which Ministers can access their entitlement. The proposed policy is based on the current policy approved by the former Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services in March 2023. The proposed Policy is attached at **Appendix A** for your consideration.
11. A core element of the Policy is that Ministers' self-drive vehicles are electric vehicles by default unless an exception is justified in a particular case. This supports the Department in its strategic goal of transitioning to a low-emissions Crown Fleet.
12. Proposed minimum standards and maximum whole-of-life cost for Ministerial self-drive vehicles are captured in the Policy. Whole-of-life costing includes an assessment of elements such as the purchase price, maintenance and running costs over a three-year period, and the residual and resale price for a vehicle.
13. In recognition of current market prices for electric vehicles, the Policy provides for a higher maximum whole of life cost for electric vehicles².
14. The Policy also provides for existing self-drive vehicles in the fleet to be reallocated from outgoing Ministers to incoming Ministers, enabling the Department to maximise vehicle usage within a three-year replacement cycle. Before reallocation is considered, assessments are undertaken to ensure vehicles are up to standard and fit for purpose.
15. If you wish to make any updates to the Policy, we can advise you of any logistical and forecast cost implications ahead of a final policy being confirmed. In the interim, alternative arrangements, such as utilising existing self-drive vehicles or using rental vehicles may be required to ensure Ministers are able to access their entitlement.

² Note – where an electric vehicle is allocated or selected, the cost of equipping a Minister's private residence to have suitable charging facilities installed is met by the Department.

16. Once a final Policy has been approved, we will begin engaging directly with Ministers to finalise their Ministerial Self-drive vehicle entitlement.

Reallocation of existing self-drive vehicles

17. Where possible, and to promote efficient use of public resources, vehicles from outgoing Ministers are made available for reallocation to incoming Ministers.
18. Following the loss of their Ministerial warrant, outgoing Ministers are required to return self drive vehicles to VIP Transport within 14 calendar days. On return, the VIP Transport team will undertake assessment, grooming and repair processes (as necessary) to ensure vehicles are suitable for reallocation.
19. To whom existing self-drive vehicles are reallocated is at the discretion of the Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services. Factors considered may include vehicle replacement due dates, lead times for new vehicles and overall fiscal pressures. Ministerial Services can complete this task on your behalf if preferred.
20. While your decision on the Policy will inform the final numbers of vehicles that are able to be retained and reallocated at this time, we can advise that at present³:
 - 28 Ministerial Self-drive vehicles are owned by the Department;
 - 19 of these vehicles are available for reallocation to Ministers based on the proposed policy; and
 - 9 of these vehicles are either due for replacement in the next 6 months or are being assessed for potential resale or reallocation (but may be available as interim vehicles while procurement activities are undertaken).
21. We will work with your office on the specifics of reallocating appropriate vehicles following the assessment process and will work with relevant Minister's offices to arrange site assessments for charging infrastructure and make vehicles available to Ministers for inspection or test-driving as needed.

Ordering of new self-drive vehicles

22. All new Ministerial self-drive vehicles must be selected from the *Self-drive Vehicle Catalogue* (the catalogue) which will be confirmed following the approval of the Policy. The catalogue will contain a custom selection of vehicles that meet the final Policy and can cater to a variety of Ministers' daily needs.
23. Vehicles selected for the catalogue will be drawn from the *MBIE All-of-Government Vehicle Catalogue* to provide assurance of value for money and alignment with government procurement practices.
24. Ministerial Services will engage directly with Ministers (who are not reallocated an existing vehicle) once the Policy has been confirmed, to review the catalogue and choose a preferred vehicle. We will manage all engagement with suppliers and can support Ministers to test drive preferred vehicles as needed.

Exemptions to the Ministerial Self-drive Vehicle Selection Policy and Standards

25. In some cases, current market options available for electric vehicles may not be suitable to meet all Ministers' specific situations. For example, there are currently

³ Numbers correct as at 27 November 2023 and are subject to change.

limited electric options that can accommodate larger families, or there may be difficulty installing charging facilities (e.g. these may not be permitted to be installed in shared or rental accommodation due to body corporation rules).

26. Under the Policy, where there is a demonstrable need for a non-electric self-drive vehicle, Ministers can request to be exempt from this expectation. To date this has been administered through a formal request for exemption to the Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services to enable case by case decisions to be made. Previously, when an exemption has been approved, it has been for a low emission vehicle in the form of a plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV).
27. If you wish to continue using an exemption process, we will work with relevant Ministers' offices to progress any requests proposed. A briefing would be provided to you for any exemption sought, outlining the request by the Minister alongside advice from Ministerial Services for your consideration.

Delivery of self-drive vehicles

28. As self-drive vehicles are allocated or selected, Ministerial Services will co-ordinate the delivery of all vehicles, as well as any site assessments for installing electric vehicle charging infrastructure at the relevant Minister's primary residence, as necessary.
29. Lead times for delivery of re-allocated self-drive vehicles to incoming Ministers will be based on when the vehicles are returned, the overall re-allocation process, and timeframes for having suitable charging infrastructure installed at the relevant Minister's primary residence.
30. Lead times for delivery of newly purchased self-drive vehicles are based on supplier availability. Timeframes for the delivery of new vehicles are therefore largely outside the Department's control. If there is an extended lead time for selected vehicles, alternative arrangements, such as temporarily allocating existing self-drive vehicles or securing rental vehicles may be required in the interim to ensure Ministers are able to access their entitlement in a timely manner.
31. Information on availability of specific vehicles can be provided when engagement with Ministers is undertaken, to ensure that Ministers are aware of relevant lead times before selecting a vehicle.
32. Once available, vehicles are each delivered directly to Ministerial Services. We will then deliver these to the relevant Minister's primary residence and will provide further advice and guidance on the vehicle and charging requirements.

Next steps

33. To enable Ministerial Services to begin engaging with Ministers on their preferred Self-drive vehicle, we seek your approval or direction as to changes required to the Policy by 8 December 2023.
34. Following your feedback and approval of a final *Ministerial Self-drive Vehicle Selection Policy and Standards* we will work to determine the allocation of existing self-drive vehicles and will engage directly with Ministers to finalise their vehicle entitlement. Ministerial Services will provide you with ongoing updates on the allocation process and notify you of any requests for exemptions received.

Recommendations

35. We recommend that you:

- a) **Note** that under the *Ministers' Travel Services within New Zealand Determination 2023*, Ministers are entitled to one self-drive vehicle for use at their discretion;
- b) **Approve** the *Ministerial Self-drive Vehicle Selection Policy and Standards* as provided in **Appendix A**;
- OR
- c) **Advise** of any changes required to the *Ministerial Self-drive Vehicle Selection Policy and Standards*;
- d) **Agree** that where possible, existing Ministerial self-drive vehicles from outgoing Ministers will be made available for reallocation to incoming Ministers;
- e) **Note** that Ministerial Services will work with you on any applicable exemption processes needed in the final *Ministerial Self-drive Vehicle Selection Policy and Standards*; and
- f) **Note** that Ministerial Services will coordinate the ordering and delivery of Ministerial Self-drive vehicles.

Yes/No

Yes/No

Yes/No



Briget Ridden
General Manager
Ministerial Services







Rt Hon Christopher Luxon
Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services

17 / 12 / 23

* Expect purchase price to be 2 x \$70,000 not \$85,000 + GST!
~~Ministerial Services~~

**Appendix A: Proposed Ministerial Self-drive Selection Policy and Standards
November 2023**

<p>Overarching Selection policy</p>	<p>Vehicles provided for selection as a Ministerial self-drive vehicle will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent with these Self drive Vehicle Selection Policy and Standards. • From an approved list of vehicles taken from the MBIE All of Government Vehicle Catalogue, as this provides the most cost effective option. <p>Vehicles provided for selection will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero or low emissions, to align with overarching strategies and expectations for reducing carbon emissions. • Fit for purpose, including a suitable Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV) driving range. • Cost effective. • Safe.
<p>Zero or low emissions</p> 	<p>Ministerial self drive vehicles will be fully electric, unless exempted formally from this policy.</p> <p>Ministers must obtain approval from the Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services for any exemption to the requirement to select a fully electric option, based on a demonstrable need for a vehicle that is not available in an appropriate fully electric option.</p> <p>Ministerial self drive vehicles that have been granted an exemption will, where possible, be a low emission vehicle, in the form of a plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV).</p>
<p>Fit for purpose</p> 	<p>Ministerial self drive vehicles will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only be selected from an approved list of vehicles taken from the MBIE All of Government Vehicle Catalogue. • Be operationally effective including a suitable BEV driving range, based on user needs, landscape, and environmental conditions.
<p>Cost effective</p> 	<p>The whole of life cost for self drive vehicles is set at a maximum of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$45,000 (excl GST) for electric vehicles. • \$40,000 (excl GST) for exempt non-electric vehicles. <p>Whole of life costing includes elements such as the purchase price, maintenance and running costs over a three-year period along with residual and resale price of that vehicle. Accounting for this the maximum purchase price is set at <u>\$85,000 excl GST.</u></p> <p>Where possible existing suitable self drive vehicles from outgoing Ministers are made available for reallocation to incoming Ministers.</p>
<p>Safe</p> 	<p>Ministerial self drive vehicles will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve a minimum 5-star ANCAP or Euro NCAP rating. • Have a minimum of four airbags, preferably six. • Have ABS or equivalent; and • Have a vehicle stability programme or equivalent.

lower value..