



**Te Tari Taiwhenua  
Internal Affairs**

22 March 2024

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KW53

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Dear KW53

**Official Information Act request (OIA 2324-0662)**

Thank you for your request for information dated 27 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 am writing to query claims made by Members of the House of the 54th Parliament under 'Members of Parliament (Accommodation Services for Members and Travel Services for Family Members) Determination 2023'.*

*Can you please confirm the below questions.*

*Speaker:*

- Does the Speaker maintain an Office Residence, or an alternative Wellington residence?*
- If an alternative Wellington residence, does the speaker own said residence and rent himself back the residence?*
- If above true, what is the weekly rent charged/claimed by Speaker to himself? Or if not available by week, the total amount claimed since the beginning of the 54th Parliament.*

*Ministers:*

- Which Ministers have Official Residences as defined by clause 26 and which maintain an alternative Wellington residence?*
- Of those who maintain an alternative Wellington residence, which Ministers own said alternative residences and rent themselves back the residence?*
- Of those who own and rent back to themselves, what is the weekly rent charged/claimed by each Minister? Or if not available by week, the total amount claimed since the beginning of the 54th Parliament.*

- *Of those who own and rent back to themselves, can you provide which Wellington suburbs these are located in (for Market Rent comparisons.)*

*Members:*

- *Which members own and rent themselves back their approved Wellington accommodation?*

- *Of those who own and rent back to themselves, what is the weekly rent charged/claimed by each Minister? Or if not available by week, the total amount claimed since the beginning of the 54th Parliament.*

- *Of those who own and rent back to themselves, can you provide which Wellington suburbs these are located in (for Market Rent comparisons.)*

*I am also seeking confirmation on if this information is regularly published anywhere to the public at a high level (ex MP accommodation costs claimed over a year) or if it is only OIA-able.*

### **Response to your request**

The Department's Ministerial Services group is responsible for administering expenses, entitlements and allowances for Ministers; therefore, the Department can only provide information for your request that is related to Ministers of the Crown.

We do not hold information related to the Speaker of the House of Representatives (the Speaker) or Members of Parliament (MPs).

Information related to the Speaker and MPs is held by the Parliamentary Service (PS), if you wish to request that information you will need to do so through PS, however they are not obligated to provide this information as PS is not subject to the Act. This precludes the Department from transferring part of your request to them as we have no legal basis to do so.

1. *Which Ministers have Official Residences as defined by clause 26 and which maintain an alternative Wellington residence?*

The Department currently manages, on behalf of the Crown, two sites in Wellington, containing three Ministerial residences. Those residences are Te Whare Pirimia – Premier House, Premier Cottage, and a Ministerial Residence on Bolton Street, Wellington.

Under clause 16(1) and 16(2) of the *Members of Parliament (Accommodation Services for Members and Travel Services for Family Members) Determination 2023*<sup>1</sup> (the Determination), Te Whare Pirimia – Premier House is the official Wellington Residence of the Prime Minister, regardless of whether the Prime Minister's primary residence is within the Wellington area.

The Department is withholding information related to the allocation of Premier Cottage and the Ministerial Residence on Bolton Street, Wellington under section 6(d) of the Act, because disclosure of the information could endanger the safety of any person.

I have considered whether the above grounds for withholding the information under section 6 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.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2023/0195/latest/whole.html>

Regarding which Ministers maintain an alternative Wellington residence, the Department releases *Minister's Travel and Accommodation expenses*<sup>2</sup> on a quarterly basis. In the quarterly releases you can find which Ministers are receiving funding towards accommodation arrangements and how much they have received for the quarter.

Therefore, the Department is refusing this part of your request under section 18(d) of the Act, that the information requested is or will soon be publicly available.

2. *Of those who maintain an alternative Wellington residence, which Ministers own said alternative residences and rent themselves back the residence?*

Every year, MPs declare their personal interest in a number of specific categories, including property and where it is located. The Register of Pecuniary and Other Specific Interests (the Register) provides transparency of members interests to the public, which is administered by PS. The latest list can be found on the New Zealand Parliament website<sup>3</sup>.

MPs who own a property need to declare it under the Register and alongside their declaration is a regional location of the property. Therefore, the Department is refusing this part of your request under section 18(d) of the Act, that the information requested is or will soon be publicly available.

3. *Of those who own and rent back to themselves, what is the weekly rent charged/claimed by each Minister? Or if not available by week, the total amount claimed since the beginning of the 54th Parliament.*

As mentioned in the response to part 1 of your request, you can find the total amount of the Wellington accommodation allowance claimed by Ministers in the quarterly proactive release of *Minister's Travel and Accommodation expenses* which is, or will soon be publicly available. Please note:

- The continuous Wellington accommodation allowance is currently set at \$52,000 per year for Ministers and \$36,400 per year for Parliamentary Under-Secretaries. Payments are pro-rated based on an assessment of a Members eligibility.
- Ministerial Services pays Members of the Executive their accommodation allowance in fortnightly instalments, alongside payment of salary and an expense allowance. The accommodation payments cease when a Members warrant ceases.
- Members of the Executive who share their accommodation with one or more other persons (excluding their spouse/partner and children under 18 years old) receive a reduced payment as below:

Number of tenants	Percentage of accommodation payment payable	Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, and Ministers	Parliamentary Under-Secretaries
Sole tenant	100%	\$52,000	\$36,000
Two tenants	70%	\$36,400	\$25,480
Three tenants	60%	\$31,200	\$21,840
Four tenants	55%	\$28,600	\$20,020

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dia.govt.nz/Ministers-expense-releases>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.parliament.nz/en/mps-and-electoralates/members-financial-interests/mps-financial-interests/2023-register-of-pecuniary-and-other-specified-interests-of-members-of-parliament-and-amendments/>

4. Of those who own and rent back to themselves, can you provide which Wellington suburbs these are located in (for Market Rent comparisons.)

Please see the note in question two.

We may publish this OIA response on [www.dia.govt.nz](http://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](http://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