



**Te Tari Taiwhenua
Internal Affairs**

4 April 2024

Ministerial Services
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Chris

[fyi-request-26012-
29e27b98@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-26012-29e27b98@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Chris

Request for information (OIA 2324-0707)

Thank you for your request for information made under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) and transferred to the Department of Internal Affairs (the Department) on 8 March 2024. You requested the following information:

I am writing to request a full, complete copy of the Premier House Board report released in 2023 to Christopher Luxon which stated that there would be approximately \$30 million NZD required to appropriately repair the Premier House. Furthermore, please also provide the complete 2018 report which was provided to Ardern stating the cost of repairs would be \$3 million NZD (at the time).

Additionally, please provide the most recent interior images of the Premier House, of which Christopher Luxon has described as being "Pretty grim" in multiple recent news publications.

Response to your request

There has been high public interest in the 'Te Pou Awe Te Whare Pirimia – Premier House Board Report on the Long-term Stewardship of Te Whare Pirimia - Premier House.' In the interests of transparency, the Department has proactively released the report on our website - www.dia.govt.nz/Proactive-Releases. Therefore, your request is refused under Section 18(d) of the Act because the information requested is publicly available.

It is our understanding that the 2018 report you refer to is a 2017 briefing to the then Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services (Rt Hon Bill English). This briefing was released under the OIA, and subsequently reported in the media. The \$3 million figure referenced was a total of the costings detailed in a table (pt 10 on page 3 of the briefing). The \$3m related specifically to security upgrades rather than general repairs and upgrades. I have attached a copy of the briefing as **Appendix One**.

Some information is withheld under the following sections of the Act:

- *Section 6(d) – as making the information available would be likely to endanger the safety of any person; and*
- *Section 9(2)(a) - to protect the privacy of natural persons*

Your request for recent images of Premier House is refused under the following section of the Act:

- *Section 6(d) – as making the information available would be likely to endanger the safety of any person*

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 One: Copy of the Premier House briefing sent to Rt Hon Bill English on 31 July 2017.

Ministerial Services briefing

Rt Hon Bill English**Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services****Title: Premier House****Date: 31 July 2017****Key issues**

This briefing provides you with an update on planned security measures for Premier House. If you agree, a Cabinet paper will be prepared seeking approval for additional funding to upgrade the security measures as recommended in an official assessment and to create a new appropriation. The proposed work is necessary to enable the property to be used as the official residence of the Prime Minister.

Action sought**Agree to seek funding for security work to be undertaken at Premier House.****Timeframe****3 August 2017****Contact for telephone discussions (if required)**

Name	Position	Direct phone line	After hours phone	Suggested 1 st contact
Andrew McConnell	General Manager, Ministerial and Secretariat Services	817 8915	s9(2)(a)	✓
Claire Lewis	Manager Ministerial Resourcing, Ministerial and Secretariat Services	817 8920	s9(2)(a)	

Return to	Wayne Murphy, Senior Advisor, Level 18, Bowen House
DMS references	Cohesion

Purpose

1. This briefing seeks your agreement to a Cabinet Paper seeking approval for additional funding in 2017/18 and outyears to implement security recommendations to enable Premier House to be used as the official residence of the Prime Minister as a result of the Members of Parliament (Accommodation Services for Members and Travel Services for Family Members and Former Prime Ministers) Amendment Determination 2017.

Background

2. Premier House, the official residence of the Prime Minister, is a Crown-owned property. This property, and Vogel House and Bolton House are administered and maintained by the Department of Internal Affairs. As the Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services, you are responsible for the following three appropriations associated with the administration and maintenance of these properties:
 - a. *Depreciation on Official Residences (Non-Departmental appropriation) - \$0.253 million.* This covers the depreciation on official residences;
 - b. *Official Residences – Maintenance Costs (Non-Departmental appropriation) - \$0.376 million.* This appropriation meets costs for maintaining official residences owned by the Crown; and the
 - c. *Support Services to Members of the Executive (part of the Departmental appropriation Services Supporting the Executive MCA) - \$0.087 million for Staff costs that are a component of this category.*
3. On 30 May 2017, the Remuneration Authority approved the Members of Parliament (Accommodation Services for Members and Travel Services for Family Members and Former Prime Ministers) Amendment Determination 2017. While Premier House is widely recognised as the official residence of the Prime Minister, the amendment establishes a legislative basis for it to be the official residence of the Prime Minister¹. The Authority noted that *"all Prime Ministers should be able to reside at Premier House, irrespective of the location of their home base, as it is the recognised official residence of the New Zealand Prime Minister. It is also a more cost-effective option than other alternatives"*.
4. The amendment will be incorporated within the Members of Parliament (Accommodation Services for Members and Travel Services for Family Members) Determination, which provides for accommodation services for all ministers.

Members of Parliament (Accommodation Services for Members and Travel Services for Family Members and Former Prime Ministers) Determination 2014

5. The Remuneration Authority's determination requires that official residences be provided with security measures recommended by an official risk and security assessment.
6. A recent assessment sets out a number of recommendations to improve the protective security environment and mitigate potential risks to an acceptable level. This establishes a need to upgrade security measures at Premier House. This work needs to be

¹ With effect from 24 September 2017

undertaken as a matter of urgency so the property can be used in accordance with the Remuneration Authority's amendment determination² which establishes Premier House as the Prime Minister's official residence.

Security Measures

7. The assessment anticipates an increase in occupancy with more people living in the house for extended periods compared with the relatively low-level of activity under the past two prime ministers and their families. This drives a need to ensure the security measures are fit for purpose. An elevated security risk raises a health and safety risk for the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister's family and any staff based at the property. These risks would be reduced by investing in new security measures ^{6(d)}
6(d)
8. The capital works recommended by the security assessment include: ^{6(d)}
6(d)
9. The security assessment also has operational recommendations that result in additional funding requirements for depreciation of the new assets, ^{6(d)}
6(d)

Financial implications for Vote Internal Affairs

10. The security recommendations entail additional capital and operating expenditure as follows:

Funding Required	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 & Outyears
	\$million	\$million	\$million	\$million	\$million
Capital	1.039	-	-	-	-
Operating	0.300	0.400	0.400	0.400	0.400

11. It is proposed that the expenditure be partially funded from cash of \$1.959 million on the Department of Internal Affairs non-departmental balance sheet and that this funding be returned to the Crown and then the Crown reinvests this money back into official residences. We are awaiting advice from Treasury on this approach.
12. While depreciation and maintenance costs for official residences are met from two non-departmental appropriations, there is no corresponding appropriation available for capital expenditure. Consequently, to undertake the work required it is proposed that the following new capital appropriation be established:

Appropriation Title	Scope
Capital Investments – Official Residences	This appropriation is limited to the development of official residences.

² Members of Parliament (Accommodation Services for Members and Travel Services for Family Members and Former Prime Ministers) Amendment Determination 2017

Comment

13. The Remuneration Authority's amendment determination, creates an expectation that Premier House will continue to be used as the official residence of the Prime Minister.
14. This highlights a need to develop a strategy for the management and development of the property to an appropriate standard for the official residence of the Prime Minister, and to maintain its heritage value.
15. Ministerial Services will work with you and your office in developing the strategy and any further work to be undertaken.

Next steps

16. If you agree, Cabinet approval will be sought for additional funding and to establish a new capital appropriation, as outlined above. As part of this, the approval of the Minister of Finance would be sought for an exemption from the end-of-year performance information requirements for the new capital expenditure appropriation³. Given that the capital expenditure will be less than \$15 million, a new non departmental capital appropriation qualifies for an exemption from end of year performance requirements.

Recommendations

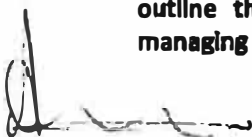
17. It is recommended that you;
 - a) note that the Remuneration Authority has amended its determination to expressly provide for Premier House to be the official residence of the Prime Minister, with effect from 24 September 2017;
 - b) note that the Members of Parliament (Accommodation Services for Members and Travel Services for Family Members and Former Prime Ministers) Determination 2014 requires that official residences be provided with security measures at the level recommended by an official risk and security assessment;
 - c) note a recent assessment of Premier House recommends upgrading the security measures at Premier House;
 - d) note that Ministerial Services urgently requires additional capital and operating funding in 2017/18 and outyears associated with security measures required for Premier House;
 - e) note that there is no non-departmental appropriation to meet capital expenditure for official residences;

³ The other official residences appropriations have been granted exemptions under section 15D(2)(b)(iii)

f) agree to seek Cabinet's agreement to approve additional funding as follows:

Funding Required	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 & Outyears
	Million	Million	Million	Million	Million
Capital	1.039	-	-	-	-
Operating	0.300	0.400	0.400	0.400	0.400

- g) note that it is proposed that the expenditure be partially funded from cash of \$1.959 million on the Department of Internal Affairs non-departmental balance sheet and that this funding be returned to the Crown and then the Crown reinvests this money back into official residences;
- h) note that we are awaiting advice from Treasury on this approach;
- i) agree that Cabinet approval be sought to establish a Capital Investment – Official Residences appropriation for the development of official residences;
- j) agree that the approval of the Minister of Finance be sought for an exemption from the end-of-year performance information requirements for the new capital expenditure appropriation as annual expenditure will be less than \$15 million;
- k) note that a draft Cabinet paper will be provided to you by 10 August 2017; and
- l) note that a strategy, yet to be developed in consultation with your office, will outline the long-term funding requirements entailed with maintaining and managing Premier House to an appropriate standard.



Andrew McConnell
General Manager
Ministerial and Secretariat Services

Rt Hon Bill English
Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services

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