



**Te Tari Taiwhenua
Internal Affairs**

16 May 2024

Ministerial Services
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J Bruning
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Dear J Bruning

Official Information Act request (OIA 2324-0590)

On 11 March 2024, the Department of Internal Affairs (the Department) wrote to advise you that an extension of time was required until 23 May 2024 to provide a decision and response on your Official Information Act request for the following information:

All advice/memos/reports/communications between Prime Minister and/or Cabinet and the Minister of Finance (or acting Minister of Finance) which refer to or discuss central bank digital currencies (CBDCs). From March 2022 – December 16 2023.

We explained that the Department's search would be limited to the electronic correspondence and emails of the Rt Hon Dame Jacinda Ardern, Rt Hon Chris Hipkins, and Hon Grant Robertson. This information falls within our responsibility as holders of former Minister's records. However, we do not hold correspondence produced by Cabinet office, nor do we hold Cabinet papers. The rules of release of such papers are governed by the Cabinet manual.

Response to your request

In response to your request the Department commissioned ¹Parliamentary Service to search the electronic records on the parliamentary server. The Department provided Parliamentary Service with specific key words, dates or topics, to help condense its search to produce the most accurate and manageable output.

For your request the Department commissioned Parliamentary Service to apply the following search parameters:

- Time period – 1 March 2022 to 16 December 2023
- Individuals – Rt Hon Dame Jacinda Ardern, Rt Hon Chris Hipkins, and Hon Grant Robertson; and
- Key word – *Central bank digital currencies, CBDCs.*

¹ Although the Department is deemed to hold the information relating to former Ministers, we do not have the ability to perform searches on the parliamentary server (where the electronic records are held). We commission Parliamentary Service (IT) to run the required searches on our behalf.

As detailed in the previous letter dated 11 March 2024, the search for electronic records on the parliamentary server will capture relevant information saved by Ministers or their staff. The information can include emails, written correspondence, text messages and social media posts.

Following the completion of the search of the former Ministers' records a total of 147 documents were identified as part of the assessment process. However, after reviewing these documents I can confirm, that no information relating to your request fell within scope. We have included these details about the search and review process to assure you that the Department has actively sought to locate any information in scope of your request.

In this instance we are unable to assist with your request for information. Therefore, the Department is refusing your request under section 18(e) of the Act that the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

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