



8 May 2019

DOIA 1819-1501

Geoffrey Roberts

[fyi-request-10126-53a7aa66@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-10126-53a7aa66@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Geoffrey Roberts

Thank you for your email of 15 April 2019 to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

*Please provide a breakdown of costs to produce the chatbot "Nancy" on the Tenancy Services website.*

The Tenancy Chatbot Nancy (the Chatbot) was developed to allow for 24/7 access for customers seeking advice and guidance on Tenancy and Bond Services information. Tenancy and Bond enquiries make up to 45 per cent of all current Service Centre call and email volumes. As such, it presents the best opportunity to assess and measure ongoing benefits both for Tenancy and Bond customers, Service Centre workforce management, and any other Ministry service that could be supported by a Chatbot channel.

The Chatbot is an opportunity to provide better services to Tenancy and Bond customers by implementing a digital Virtual Assistant (the Chatbot) on a Conversational Artificial Intelligence platform.

As at 8 April 2019, the Chatbot has cost a total of \$207,522. The Ministry is unable to provide you with a breakdown of this figure as if released, it would be likely to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information. As such, your request is refused under section 9(2)(b)(ii) of the Act. The greater public interest is in ensuring that the commercial position can be maintained.

In making my decision to withhold information under section 9(2) of the Act, I did not consider the withholding of this information was outweighed by public interest considerations in making it available.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

Craig Ironside  
National Manager Service Centres  
Market Services