



Te Tari Taiwhenua Internal Affairs

22 August 2019

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Kia ora Mr Crow

Your Official Information Act 1982 request OIA Reference 1920-0090

Thank you for your Official Information Act (the Act) request, received by the Department of Internal Affairs (Department) on 26 July 2019.

You requested:

It has been shown that air travel is a large contribution to global climate change. I am keen to get measurements or numbers to show what government is doing about this.

Under OIA I request:

- 1. Total number of airline tickets purchased in 18/19 financial year.*
- 2. Breakdown by domestic vs international.*
- 3. Any internal plans to reduce airline travel.*
- 4. Job titles of the top 5 travellers.*
- 5. Any other information that would help the public understand the departments use of airline travel.*

Response:

Our response to parts 1, 2 and 4 of your requests:

- 1. Total number of airline tickets purchased in 18/19 financial year.*
- 2. Breakdown by domestic vs international.*
- 4. Job titles of the top 5 travellers.*

The Department's preferred supplier for travel management is Orbit Travel under the All-of-Government (AoG) contract. Approximately 88 per cent of Departmental airline travel expenditure was booked through Orbit Travel in 2018/19.

The total number of airline tickets purchased through Orbit Travel in 2018/19 was 7,730. Please refer to the above table for the breakdown by domestic/trans-Tasman and international travel. The number of airline tickets purchased includes one-way as well as separate return flights depending on the booking.

Number of airline tickets purchased through Orbit Travel	Breakdown of travel
7,503	Domestic and trans-Tasman
227	International

We are unable to provide you with the remaining number of airline tickets booked through other travel suppliers in 2018/19, as the information is not held in a way that would disclose the number of individual tickets purchased without manually reviewing each individual transaction and invoice.

Therefore, the Department is partially refusing parts 1 and 2 under section 18(f) of the Act, as the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research. We have considered whether fixing a charge or extending the timeframe for responding to this part of the request would enable this information to be provided to you, however in this case we do not think it would, as it is not possible to accurately calculate how much time would be required for this collation and research.

In response to part 4 of your request relating to job titles of the top 5 traveller, the Department is currently preparing this information for the *Governance and Administration Select Committee Annual Review 2018/19*. The information will be publicly released after the Select Committee has had the opportunity to review it and will be available on the Parliamentary website in late 2019 / early 2020 at the website address below:

<https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/submissions-and-advice/>

Until the Select committee has had the opportunity to review the information, this information is withheld under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act, in order to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and Officials.

However, the Department regularly releases information about air travel expenditure as part of its response to the *Governance and Administration Select Committee Annual Review*. Air travel expenditure data provided to the Select Committee is also broken down into domestic and international travel and lists the top twenty travellers by position.

We can refer you to the *Governance and Administration Select Committee Annual Review 2017/18* for domestic and international travel details.

Question 96 (refer to page 78) and Question 98 (refer to page 80) responses:

https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/52SCGA_EVI_83830_GA2570/53579ebc46f901e7d6901e49e286197800c8bf7b

The response for Question 96 (domestic travel expenditure) provides the total expenditure for domestic travel for 2017/18 and the previous four financial years, and the list of top 20 domestic travellers for 2017/18 including expenditure (broken down by airfares, taxis/UBER and rental cars).

Question 98 – Appendix 10 (refer to page 158): https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/52SCGA_EVI_83830_GA2569/160c0bc6cf1ab408c930a4cdc89c972a845a250a

The response to Question 98 (international travel expenditure) provides total expenditure for international travel in the 2017/18 financial year and previous four financial years. *Appendix 10* lists the positions of international travellers for 2017/18, including expenditure (broken down by travel, accommodation and other expenses), locations travelled, reason visited, and outcomes achieved.

Our response to part 3 of your request:

3. Any internal plans to reduce airline travel.

The Department's main office in Wellington is equipped with video, skype and tele-conferencing technology to enable people to meet virtually with people in other locations, with an aim to reduce land and air travel by staff.

The Department's travel policy sets the expectation for staff to use skype, tele- or video-conference for engaging with individuals in other locations, and explicitly sets out that air travel must *only* be booked if justified as an alternative method of conducting business.

If travel is identified to be necessary in the circumstances, staff must go through a process to seek approval for the proposed travel. A higher level of approval is required for travel at short notice.

Our response to part 5 of your request:

5. Any other information that would help the public understand the departments use of airline travel.

The Cabinet manual instructions to Ministers regarding overseas travel can be found on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet website (Refer to the link below).

<https://dpmc.govt.nz/our-business-units/cabinet-office/supporting-work-cabinet/cabinet-manual/2-ministers-crown-11>

Preferred airline travel suppliers are selected by the AoG contracts system operated by the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment. You are able to find more information about AoG contracts on the New Zealand Government Procurement website (Refer to the link below).

<https://www.procurement.govt.nz/contracts/air-travel-services/>

Here is some further information from the Department's Travel Policy on booking domestic and international travel:

- For domestic and trans-tasman travel, the Department's travel policy states that preferred suppliers must always be used as a first preference. All travel is to be on the lowest appropriate and practicable fare/rate available at the time of booking. Travellers who book flights other than the lowest appropriate fare are required to provide a business justification for doing so in their request for travel. The traveller's personal preferences or any airline club membership must not influence the selection of flights.

- For international travel, the best available economy class fare should be booked for flights of 9 hours continuous flying time or less. For economy class travel on flights longer than 9 hours continuous flying time a stopover of up to 24 hours can be made. Premium economy may be booked for flights of more than 9 hours continuous flying time, where no stop over is taken and arriving more than 24 hours prior to commencing work duties. Business class may be booked for non-stop flights of more than 9 hours continuous flying time when arriving within 24 hours of commencing work duties.

Ministers' travel and accommodation expenses are released quarterly and can be found on the Department's website: <https://www.dia.govt.nz/Ministers-expense-releases>.

You are also able to find the Department's Annual Review submissions for previous financial years on the parliamentary website below:

<https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/submissions-and-advice/>

If you have any feedback or questions about the Department's response, please let us know at OIA@DIA.govt.nz.

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 or Freephone 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi



Arun Patel
Chief Financial Officer