

5 September 2019

19-D-01655

Michael Brown
fyi-request-10950-40abf5e8@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Michael

Thank you for your request of 11 August 2019 requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

One of the main sources of GHGs is the transport sector, and air travel in particular. My question is: Does the MFE offset carbon emissions resulting from staff air travel?

Could you please also provide the following information:

- 1. If MFE does offset staff-air-travel related carbon emissions, then please provide the policy and operational documents relating to the offsetting.*
- 2. The total kilometers of air travel taken by MFE staff in the 2018-2019 financial year.*
- 3. The amount of carbon produced by this 2018-2019 air travel (if information is available).*
- 4. The name of the external organisation who externally verified the figures for questions (2) and (3), if this data has been verified.*
- 5. If MFE has offset the GHG emissions resulting from the 2018-2019 air travel, provide the cost of the offsetting and details about the organisation(s) who provided the carbon credits.*
- 6. If MFE is not currently offsetting its GHG emissions, please provide any documents relating to the estimated cost of doing this and plans to implement offsetting.*

Does the Ministry offset carbon emissions?

The Ministry for the Environment does not currently offset carbon emissions from staff air travel. The Ministry's primary focus to date has been on minimising its carbon footprint. However, the Ministry is currently reviewing this.

Ministry carbon emissions from air travel

The Ministry's air travel, resultant carbon produced, and verification for these figures is publicly available through the Certified Emissions Measurement and Reduction Scheme (CEMARS) certification on the Enviro-mark website. The Ministry's CEMARS certification also outlines, among other goals, a commitment to reduce travel emissions by 20% by 2020.

This certification for the 2017/18 year can be found at the following link:

<https://www.enviro-mark.com/our-members/members/ministry-for-the-environment>

Please note that the figures for the 2018/19 year, including distance travelled, have only just been finalised and will be published on the Enviro-mark website in the next month. As it will soon be publicly available, the

information you have requested in questions 2, 3, and 4 is refused under section 18(d) of the Act. For your question 2, the total emissions from our air travel will be available on the Enviro-mark website. On distance travelled, we use the passenger kilometre (pkm) unit. For domestic and international flights in 2018/19, we've calculated 3,509,245.11 pkm in total. For more information on this unit, you can refer to our 2019 detailed guide on measuring and reporting emissions:

<https://www.mfe.govt.nz/sites/default/files/media/Climate%20Change/2019-detailed-guide.pdf>

You may find the following link helpful, as it provides carbon emissions calculations, including common calculations for flights:

<https://www.enviro-mark.com/tools-and-resources/faqs-and-glossary#carbonZeroCEMARS>

Costs of offsetting

The Ministry does not currently offset carbon emissions or have formal plans to do so. We understand from Enviro-Mark, during CEMARS certification, that the estimate for offsetting using NZ credits (if these were available) would be ~\$35 per tonne. Question 5 of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information does not exist. However, the following link offers calculator functions that may provide you an indication of costs should you wish to do so:

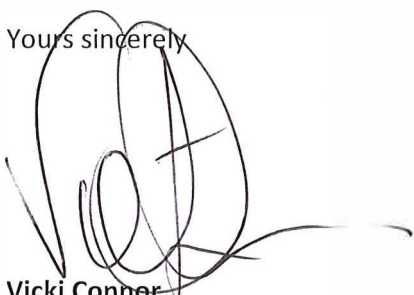
<https://www.enviro-mark.com/what-we-offer/carbon-management#carbon-credits>

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of this response, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on their website at: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Please note that due to the public interest in our work, the Ministry for the Environment publishes responses to requests for official information on our website on our OIA responses page shortly after the response has been sent.

If you have any queries about this, please feel free to contact our Executive Relations team.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vicki Connor', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Vicki Connor
Director, Communications and Engagement