

# Hon Dr Megan Woods

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## MP for Wigram

Minister of Energy and Resources

Minister for Greater Christchurch Regeneration

Minister of Housing

Minister of Research, Science and Innovation

Fraser Seifert

[fyi-request-13353-69bdd175@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-13353-69bdd175@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Ref: OIA20-93

Dear Fraser

Thank you for your email of 21 July 2020 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- 1. correspondence within and between the relevant Ministries and to/from your office regarding charging for mandatory isolation*
- 2. relevant Cabinet papers relating to this policy*
- 3. an estimation of the cumulative hours spent developing this policy to date*
- 4. the estimation of the cost to administer this policy including the processing of exemption requests*

Part 1 of your request necessitated a search for a large amount of information and is still currently being assessed for release under the Act. I apologise for the delay in getting the information to you and note that the correspondences in scope of your request will be sent to you in due course.

With regard to part 2 of your request, the relevant Cabinet papers have been outlined below:

- MBIE CAB-20-MIN-0284 A Sustainable Quarantine and Managed Isolation System
- MBIE CAB-20-MIN-0317 Co-payment Options for Managed Isolation and Quarantine
- MBIE SWC-20-MIN-0109 Establishing Fees for Managed Isolation and Quarantine
- MBIE 2021-0350 COVID-19 Public Health Response Amendment Bill: Approval for Introduction
- MBIE 2021-0413 COVID-19 Public Health Response (Managed Isolation and Quarantine Charges) Regulations 2020

The cabinet paper MBIE CAB-20-MIN-0284 'A Sustainable Quarantine and Managed Isolation System' has been proactively released on 31 July 2020 and can be found at:

<https://covid19.govt.nz/updates-and-resources/legislation-and-key-documents/proactive-release/>. The other four items are currently being prepared for

proactive release and will be made available in due course. As such your request for copies of the relevant cabinet papers under section 18(d) of the Act as the information is or will soon be publicly available.

Please note that some information has been, or is likely to be withheld from these documents under the following sections of the Act:

- 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of individuals;
- 9(2)(f)(iv), to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials; or
- 9(2)(g)(ii), to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the protection of such Ministers, members of organisations, officers, and employees from improper pressure or harassment;
- 9(2)(h), to maintain legal professional privilege; or
- 9(2)(i), to enable a Minister of the Crown or any public service agency or organisation holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities.

I do not consider that the withholding of this information under section 9(2) is outweighed by public interest considerations in making the information available.

With regard to part 3 of your request, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) is the lead agency for MIQ and develops policy for MIQ related matters under my direction as Minister of Housing, with responsibility for MIQ.

I have been advised that MBIE does not collate information on the average number of hours committed to developing policy for each policy analyst or manager. Policy analysts and managers develop policy as part of their daily responsibilities, and an estimation of the average number of hours committed to developing a specific policy cannot be carried out with any meaningful accuracy.

Therefore this part of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act; that the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation and research.

I have interpreted part 4 of your request to mean an estimation of the operational cost involved in administering the fees framework for MIQ including the processing of fee waivers.

MBIE, as the lead agency for MIQ, have set up a dedicated team to administer the fees framework for MIQ. The responsibilities of this team include collecting information from arrivals at MIQ to determine liability for charges, processing fee waivers for MIQ, and invoicing those who are liable for the charges for their stay at MIQ.

The estimated monthly cost of running this team is roughly \$200,000. These costs include personnel costs with the team consisting of 21 FTEs, support costs which

include corporate overheads, specific software licensing, and an estimated proportion of call centre costs.

Please note, you have been provided with an estimate of the monthly cost rather than an overall figure as operations will continue to remain in place while New Zealand maintains its MIQ requirements.

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.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Woods', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Hon Dr Megan Woods  
**Minister with responsibility for Managed Isolation and Quarantine**