

8 June 2021

Anatoly Kern  
fyi-request-15394-f3fae5fc@requests.fyi.org.nz

Our ref: **OIA 87843**

Dear Mr Kern

**Official Information Act request: Shadow banning**

Thank you for your email of 7 May 2021 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), information on shadow banning. Specifically, you requested:

*...any documents that relate to this practice? e.g. work instructions.  
More specifically I am looking for the list of keywords/filters currently set on MoJ email servers.*

We have made the assumption that by 'shadow banning' you are referring to blacklisting or blocking of email addresses. If we have incorrectly interpreted your definition of 'shadow banning', please let us know. You can contact [oia@justice.govt.nz](mailto:oia@justice.govt.nz) with further information if required.

The Ministry of Justice holds no documents (by documents we are referring to policies/protocols) that relate to the practice of blacklisting or blocking email addresses, nor is there a list of banned email keywords or filters. Therefore I am refusing your request under section 18(e) of the Act on the grounds that the information does not exist. However, I have provided general information on the Ministry's email security system below.

To align with the email security requirements defined in the New Zealand Information Security Manual, the Ministry places specific email addresses or domains in its restricted list. Our restricted list allows us to block malicious or harmful content from reaching our email servers based on the following factors:

- The Ministry has automated systems that dynamically restrict known malicious email addresses or domains based on reputation and other risk factors;
- Ministry systems may block email addresses or certain domains when requested by Ministry or judicial staff members. Requests must be supported by a valid business justification; and
- The security team may identify (or be alerted to) an email that is malicious, such as a phishing email or email containing malware of some kind. These are treated as security incidents which result in the email source address being placed on the restricted list.

This system is mainly managed and maintained by our supplier. However the Ministry's security team can also restrict or whitelist where required or where requested to do so through the process.

If you are not satisfied with my response to your request, you have the right to complain to the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Act. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tina Wakefield', with a stylized flourish at the beginning.

Tina Wakefield  
**Deputy Secretary – Corporate and Digital Services**