



24 May 2024

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Tēnā koe Mike

**Official Information Act 1982 request, reference OIA2324-0839**

Thank you for your email of 11 April 2024 requesting the following information from Te Tari Taiwhenua | the Department of Internal Affairs under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

- 1. Correspondence within the Department of Internal Affairs regarding Deputy Chief Executive Maria Robertson's communication with Frederick Gibson (Fred Again) or his team.*
- 2. Correspondence to or between the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Department of Internal Affairs regarding Fred Again or his team.*
- 3. Correspondence to or between the Department of Internal Affairs and Fred Again or his team.*

On 6 May 2024, the timeframe for your request was extended to 27 May 2024. Pursuant to sections 15A(1)(a) and 15A(1)(b) of the Act, this extension was necessary because your request necessitated a search through a large quantity of information, and consultations necessary to make a decision on your request were such that a proper response could not reasonably be made within the original time limit.

**Response to your request**

There are 52 documents in scope of your request, enclosed as **Appendix A**.

As the Department is unable to comment on, or provide information relating to, the processing of a private individual's passport application, some information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, as withholding this information is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons.

Please note that all correspondence between Deputy Chief Executive Maria Robertson and Frederick Gibson is in the public domain; however, it contains information relating to the processing of a private individual's passport application. Therefore, I am withholding *Document 1* in full under section 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of natural persons.

As is required by section 9(1) of the Act, I have considered whether the grounds for withholding information in these documents are outweighed by other considerations which

would make it desirable, in the public interest, to make them available. In this instance, I do not consider that to be the case. Some information has also been withheld within these documents as it is out of scope of your request.

The Department recently commissioned an independent assurance review of the processing of Tessa Hills' passport application. It found that correct processing procedures were followed, and that no preferential treatment was given. The full report is available at: [dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/Files/DIA-Passport-Assurance-Review/\\$file/DIA-Passport-Assurance-Review-May-2024.pdf](https://dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/Files/DIA-Passport-Assurance-Review/$file/DIA-Passport-Assurance-Review-May-2024.pdf).

### **Proactive release**

We intend to publish our response to your request on [www.dia.govt.nz](http://www.dia.govt.nz). This letter, with your personal details removed, will be published in its entirety. Publishing responses increases the availability of information to the public and is consistent with the Act's purpose of enabling more effective participation in the making and administration of laws and policies and promoting the accountability of Ministers and officials.

### **Access to the Ombudsman**

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the Act, to seek an investigation and review of my decision by the Office of the Ombudsman. The postal address of the Office of the Ombudsman is PO Box 10152, Wellington. Alternatively, you can phone 0800 802 602 or email [info@ombudsman.parliament.govt.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.govt.nz)

Nāku noa, nā



Karen Hope-Cross  
**Director Office of the Chief Executive**

## Appendix A

| #  | Document name  | Document date     | Decision           | Relevant section/s of the Act |
|----|--|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1  | Instagram screenshot: Maria Robertson and Fred Again | 26 March 2024     | Withheld in full   | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 2  | Text messages: Maria Robertson                       | 26 March 2024     | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 3  | Text messages: Maria Robertson                       | 26/ 27 March 2024 | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 4  | Text messages: Maria Robertson                       | 26/ 27 March 2024 | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 5  | Text messages: Maria Robertson                       | 27 March 2024     | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 6  | Email: Media queries                                 | 27 March 2024     | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 7  | Email: Media lines                                   | 27 March 2024     | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 8  | Email: Media lines                                   | 27 March 2024     | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 9  | Email: Media query                                   | 27 March 2024     | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 10 | Email: Media query                                   | 27 March 2024     | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 11 | Email: Media query                                   | 27 March 2024     | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 12 | Email: Media statement                               | 27 March 2024     | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 13 | Email: Proposed media responses                      | 27 March 2024     | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 14 | <i>Attachment to document 13: Passport responses</i> | 27 March 2024     | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 15 | Email: Media response                                | 27 March 2024     | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 16 | Email: Interview request                             | 27 March 2024     | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 17 | Email: Interview request                             | 27 March 2024     | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 18 | Email: Media response                                | 27 March 2024     | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 19 | Email: Media queries                                 | 27 March 2024     | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |

| #  | Document name   | Document date      | Decision           | Relevant section/s of the Act |
|----|---|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 20 | Email: Proposed media responses<br><i>Attachment: see document 14</i> | 27 March 2024      | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 21 | Email: Proposed media responses                                       | 27 March 2024      | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 22 | Email: Media lines  | 27 March 2024      | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 23 | Email: Passport timeline  | 27 March 2024      | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 24 | Email: Media query  | 27 March 2024      | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 25 | Email: Interview request  | 27 March 2024      | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 26 | Text messages: Paul James   | 27 March 2024      | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 27 | Text messages: Karen Hope-Cross                                       | 27 March 2024      | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 28 | Email: Complaint  | 27 March 2024      | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 29 | Email: Media query  | 27 March 2024      | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 30 | Email: Media query follow-up  | 27 March 2024      | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 31 | Email: Media query  | 27 March 2024      | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 32 | Email: Complaint  | 27 March 2024      | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 33 | Email: Complaint  | 27 March 2024      | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 34 | Text messages: Paul James   | 27 / 28 March 2024 | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 35 | Text messages: Paul James   | 28 March 2024      | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 36 | Email: Weekend Media Summary  | 28 March 2024      | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 37 | Chief Executive's pānui   | 2 April 2024       | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 38 | Email: Ministerial correspondence                                     | 2 April 2024       | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 39 | Email: Ministerial correspondence                                     | 2 April 2024       | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 40 | Text messages: Karen Hope-Cross                                       | 2 April 2024       | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |

| #  | Document name  | Document date | Decision           | Relevant section/s of the Act |
|----|--|---------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 41 | Email: I'm Listening proposed response                               | 3 April 2024  | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 42 | Email: Ministerial correspondence                                    | 3 April 2024  | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 43 | Text messages: Karen Hope-Cross                                      | 3 April 2024  | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 44 | Email: OIAs  | 3 April 2024  | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 45 | Email: Ministerial responses   | 3 April 2024  | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 46 | <i>Attachment to document 45: Ministerial response to [Withheld]</i> | 3 April 2024  | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 47 | <i>Attachment to document 45: Ministerial response to [Withheld]</i> | 3 April 2024  | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 48 | Chief Executive's responses: I'm Listening                           | 4 April 2024  | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 49 | Email: Planned response  | 10 April 2024 | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 50 | Email: Ministerial Correspondence                                    | 10 April 2024 | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 51 | <i>Attachment to document 50: Ministerial response to [Withheld]</i> | 10 April 2024 | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |
| 52 | <i>Attachment to document 50: Ministerial response to [Withheld]</i> | 10 April 2024 | Partially released | 9(2)(a)                       |