



**Te Tari Taiwhenua
Internal Affairs**

12 August 2024

Ministerial Services
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Dear Matthew

Official Information Act request (2425-0068)

Thank you for your request for information dated 10 July 2024 made under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC). In the letter dated 19 July 2024 from DPMC you were informed that your request had been partially transferred to the Department of Internal Affairs (the Department). You have requested the following information:

I am requesting information regarding both budgeted and the actual spend in NZD of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet for promotional and marketing material for years 2022, 2023 and 2024 (to 10/06/2024). This includes the cost of photographers, editors, social media teams, public relations (PR) staff, press secretaries etc and anyone else who works toward the goal of promoting Prime Minister and Cabinet public relations. I am requesting that this information be split into quarter yearly reports with itemised accounts of what each general job title has cost (photographer, social media manager, editor etc).

I am requesting that it also be included how much has been spent to have these staff with the PM on each trip abroad for the time periods requested with itemised accounts of travel expenses including flights, accommodation and any other cost incurred as a result of these teams travelling with the PM.

The Department will be responding to the parts of your request relating to the cost of press secretaries accompanying Prime Ministers during international travel (as per the underlined sections above).

Background Information

The Ministerial Services Group within the Department has responsibility for processing and administering the payment of expenses related to Ministerial travel. This covers all members of a Ministerial party approved by Cabinet to be paid for by Vote Internal Affairs (Ministerial Services). This includes members of staff sent to support the Prime Minister or Ministers which can include Press Secretaries. On occasions there may be members of the wider travelling party that are paid for separately, for example by other government departments.

Proactively released Cabinet minutes on proposed and approved international travel can be found on the website of the agency responsible. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet¹ and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade² regularly release these publications.

Response to your Request

In our email dated 31 July 2024, we informed you that we are unable to provide you with itemised travel expenses. This is due to the way the Department receives and receipts invoices for Ministerial travel. Invoices are receipted against a specific trip rather than against a member of the Cabinet approved Ministerial travel party. To apportion an invoice to a specific member of staff would require substantial collation and research.

Therefore, we are refusing your request under section 18(f) of the Act as the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

However, working within the spirit of the Act, I recognise that although we are not able to provide the information to the level of detail you have requested, the Department can provide you with links to the *Ministers' Travel and Accommodation Expenses Quarterly Release* and the *Ministerial Credit Card Expenses Quarterly Release*.

The Department is required under legislation to release aggregated expenses on Ministerial travel and accommodation on a quarterly basis on its website³. The next release of Ministers' travel expenses (covering the period 1 April to 30 June 2024) is scheduled for 22 August 2024. You can also find expense reports for past Governments⁴, as well as current and past Ministerial credit card statements and reconciliations⁵ on the Department's website.

¹ <https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/publications>

² https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/media-and-resources?categories=cabinet_papers&page=1

³ <https://www.dia.govt.nz/Ministers-expense-releases>

⁴ <https://www.dia.govt.nz/Ministers-expense-releases---previous-disclosures>

⁵ https://www.dia.govt.nz/pubforms.nsf/wpg_MCCE?Openview

The costs reported in these releases cover any persons travelling with the Prime Minister, Ministers, and their staff for Cabinet approved international travel. More information on Ministerial travel⁶ can be found in the Cabinet Manual⁷.

Additional Note

For your information, it is a convention that all Ministers, including the Prime Minister, release copies of their Ministerial diaries on the Beehive website⁸. These can be accessed by using the 'Advanced search' option. These releases may help identify specific trips that could be of interest.

We may publish this OIA response on www.dia.govt.nz (with your personal details having been removed). Publishing responses to OIA requests increases the availability of information to the public and is consistent with the purpose of the Act to enable effective participation in the making and administration of laws and policies, and to promote the accountability of Ministers and officials.

If you have any concerns with the information in this response, you have a right to request an investigation and review by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Act. Information on how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Briget Ridden

General Manager – Ministerial Services

Te Haumi – Enterprise Partnerships

Te Tari Taiwhenua – The Department of Internal Affairs

⁶ <https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/our-business-units/cabinet-office/supporting-work-cabinet/cabinet-manual/2-ministers-crown-12>

⁷ <https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/our-business-units/cabinet-office/supporting-work-cabinet/cabinet-manual>

⁸ <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/>