

23 October 2024

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OIA 29663

Tēnā koe Do Kyun Kim

Thank you for your email of 4 September 2024 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

1. *I would like to obtain all of the text messages sent to Director General Seo Min-Jung of South Korea from Ambassador Dawn Bennet regarding the Ferry Cancellation as reported in a recent Radio New Zealand article*  
<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/political/526974/korea-ferry-cancellation-talks-were-two-texts-sent-within-an-hour-of-announcement>

*The article mentioned two text messages specifically however, my request is beyond the two text messages and any messages sent and received between the two parties would be greatly appreciated.*

2. *I made a request earlier about text messages to DG Seo, this request is a separate one asking for Official Communications sent to Ambassador Bennet leading up to the Ferry Cancellation.*

*I want the exact copy of the comms please whether it was an email, or texts, or fax etc.*

*<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/political/526974/korea-ferry-cancellation-talks-were-two-texts-sent-within-an-hour-of-announcement>*

On 2 October 2024, the timeframes for responding to your request were extended by an additional 20 working days due to the consultations necessary to make a decision on your request (section 15A(1)(b) of the OIA refers).

The information relevant to your request is attached. We have withheld some information under the following sections of the OIA:

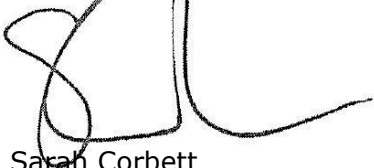
- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the New Zealand Government;
- 9(2)(a): to protect individuals' privacy;
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments; and,
- 9(2)(g)(ii): to protect officials from improper pressure or harassment.

Where the information has been withheld under section 9 of the OIA, we have identified no public interest in releasing the information that would override the reasons for withholding it.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Therefore, our response to your request (with your personal information removed) may be published on the Ministry website: [www.mfat.govt.nz/en/about-us/contact-us/official-information-act-responses/](http://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/about-us/contact-us/official-information-act-responses/)

If you have any questions about this decision, you can contact us by email at: [DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz). You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision by contacting [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SC', written over a faint, illegible background.

Sarah Corbett  
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade