

25 October 2024

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OIA 29729

Tēnā koe Jack Tallot

Thank you for your email of 1 October 2024 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

- '1. The costs, both ongoing and up-front, of appointing a High Commissioner to Nauru.*
- 2. When this role was opened for applications.*
- 3. When the decision was made to create this position, and by whom that decision was made.*
- 4. A copy of the original hiring plan for MFAT after the Government's cost-saving call to all ministries.'*

AND

*'... comparison figure showing the cost-saving achieved by your ministry following the coalition government's directive to save costs. Specifically, I'm looking for a percentage figure showing the change in Ministry of Foreign Affairs' spending since 1/3/24.'*

The role of High Commissioner to Nauru was opened for applications during the week of 4 December 2023.

Historically, this role has been serviced via cross-accreditation and was first established in 1974. This accreditation was first held by the High Commissioner to Fiji, and more recently by the High Commissioner to the Solomon Islands. In 2013, then Minister of Foreign Affairs Hon Murray McCully chose to service the accreditation from Wellington, and a Wellington-based High Commissioner was appointed, carrying out the role of High Commissioner to Nauru within their work remit as a Unit Manager in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (the Ministry) Melanesia & Micronesia Division, Pacific & Development Group.

The hiring plan for the Nauru High Commissioner position followed the Ministry's normal recruitment processes. With the focus on Government cost-saving objectives, the Ministry currently has implemented an elevated level of approval prior to vacancies being advertised.

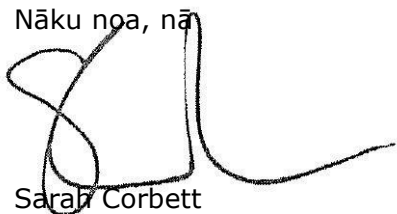
The costs associated with appointing the High Commissioner to Nauru are part of the Ministry's business as usual recruitment processes. This information is refused under section 18(f) of the OIA, as the information requested would require the identification and separation of funding for the advertising, hiring and appointment of the High Commissioner position from other recruitment processes.

The Ministry made a permanent annual saving of NZ\$15 million in Vote Foreign Affairs as a contribution to the whole-of-government savings exercise. This applies to the 2024/25 financial year. It is approximately 1% of the Ministry's total annual spend.

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 'Sarah Corbett', written over a faint, illegible background.

Sarah Corbett  
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade