



2 December 2024

Anna Wilson
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Ref: OIA 195 2024-25

Dear Anna

Official Information Act request: Ministerial diaries in relation to international travel

Thank you for your email dated 11 November 2024 to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, which was subsequently transferred to this office on 14 November 2024. You requested:

"I am getting in touch with a question about the publication of Ministerial diaries on the Beehive website. In the previous term of Government, these Ministerial diaries accounted for all activities undertaken by Ministers - including their overseas travel. Domestic activities and international activities were published in the same level of detail which was very useful. In this current term of Government, I have noticed that Ministerial diaries now only list "Overseas Travel" with an indication of the days overseas and there is no further detail provided about what meetings or engagements the Minister undertook. I made an OIA request for this information to Minister McClay's office who pointed me to the proactive release of Cabinet papers reporting back on the Minister's overseas travel. While these Cabinet papers include details of the people that the Minister met with while overseas, they do not show the date of these meetings, the time of these meetings, the duration of these meetings, or which officials or other parties were in attendance at these meetings. In addition, these Cabinet papers have to go through a lengthy proactive release process in contrast to the Ministerial diaries which are often uploaded quite soon after the conclusion of each month. I wanted to ask whether you knew why this change had been made and whether Ministers are expected to account for their domestic and international engagements in a consistent way? Is this governed by a standing order or a speaker's ruling. You can see the contrast in available information if you look through the published Ministerial diaries of people like the Foreign Affairs Minister or the Trade Minister in this Government and then the last few Government.

I can advise that the convention of proactively releasing summarised Ministerial diaries began in 2018. Prior to that, Ministers did not collate or proactively release monthly summaries of their diaries.

The release process is managed by each Minister's office. The relevant details are collated as part of diary management and each month a summary of the meeting information in the Ministerial diary

is proactively released on the Beehive website¹. It is the individual Minister's responsibility to release their dairies, with the assistance of their office staff.

I can confirm that there has been no standing order or ruling regarding information about international travel included in the published dairies. It should be noted that Ministers overseas itineraries are a work in progress and are often subject to multiple last minute changes. The amount of detail that is included in a published diary are a best effort endeavour, based on guidelines, by the relevant Minister and their office.

As you note, more information about Ministers international travel is available in proactively released Cabinet papers. While there may be a delay in the release of this information these Cabinet papers generally include more detail about the purpose of the travel than would be available in the dairies.

I hope this has answered your question. You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my response under section 28(3) of the Act.

Yours sincerely



Cameron Burrows
Chief of Staff

¹ [Ministerial dairies full disclaimer | Beehive.govt.nz](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/ministerial-diaries)