



MP for Rimutaka

Minister of Education

Minister of State Services

30 May 2018

Leader of the House

Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services

Suzanne Newton

[fyi-request-7496-](mailto:fyi-request-7496-567c0931@requests.fyi.org.nz)

567c0931@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Suzanne Newton

Official Information Act request

I refer to your Official Information Act (the Act) request of 21 March 2018, requesting the following information:

I would like to know the full amount of the cost to the New Zealand tax payer for the visit of ex-President Barack Obama to New Zealand in March 2018.

Included in this, but not exclusive to, I would like to know the full cost of any travel, vehicles, security measures, accommodation, meals, Special Services, time involved in preparation and closing of the visit, NZ Police Special services, signage, road closures, special clothing and other such items, wages for extra personnel, payments to staff and /or /others involved, price of any gifts, rewards, or any items given to Barack Obama, and / or any person engaged or connect to the visit e.g. John Key, who may have been paid, received gifts, wages items or such to be part of this event.

In short I would like to know exactly what the cost to New Zealand has been to host an ex-President.

I would also like to know what justification, i.e. financial benefit to New Zealand, this visit is meant to produce. I would like that in a dollar amount, as I am sure New Zealand is not in the habit of giving expensive holidays to the now unemployed without some benefit to ALL New Zealanders.

You have requested 'the full amount of the cost to the New Zealand tax payer for the visit'. It should be noted that the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) does not hold the full amount of the cost to the New Zealand taxpayer, I do not consider that any agency would hold this information. However each agency involved in the visit will hold the costs of the services they provided during the visit.

As advised in my earlier letter in May 2018, I have transferred the part of your request about costs incurred by other agencies to NZ Police, to NZ Customs Service and to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT).

I also transferred the part of your request about the justification for the visit to MFAT, as that Ministry is responsible for foreign policy and international relations, and I believe that they hold this information.

The March 2018 visit to New Zealand by former President Barack Obama was a private visit with government support. The visit was accorded Guest of Government status by the Prime Minister. The DIA's Visits and Ceremonial Office is responsible for supporting Guests of Government. The Department of Internal Affairs' (DIA) role was one of logistical support and co-ordination of parts of the visit programme.

The direct costs incurred by DIA (excluding GST) were as follows:

Item	Cost
Pōwhiri	\$4,502.80
Communications staff*	\$3,856.00
Domestic Travel (flights, taxis for public sector staff)	\$1,813.40
Transport Related Costs (Crown cars, vehicles; accommodation for public sector staff)	\$21,548.79
Sundry expenses	\$239.31
Grand Total	\$31,960.30

*Please note that this cost is a salary recovery from one business unit in DIA to another, and is a neutral cost to the Department.

Please also note that these costs do not include the salary costs of other DIA staff undertaking work on this visit as part of their normal duties.

If you have any concerns with the decisions referred to in this letter, you have the right to request an investigation and review by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Act.

Yours sincerely



Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services