

18 September 2018

Matthew Hooton  
[fyi-request-8704-3955c2d5@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-8704-3955c2d5@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Mr Hooton,

**Official Information Act request**

Thank you for your Official Information Act request dated 18 September for *all communications to any party outside Statistics NZ relating to the management and content of the June 2018 quarter GDP Data release, scheduled for Thursday 20 September, that has occurred up to 11.30 am Tuesday 18 September.*

All communications with parties outside of Stats NZ in scope of your request are attached to this email.

For your information, the below statement which was provided to the Minister of Statistics (in the email attached) was sent to several media outlets and business analysts this morning, following the media attention on the GDP release:

*Government Statistician Liz MacPherson says there are “absolutely not” any hints to anyone, including the Prime Minister, before the release of economic growth figures from Stats NZ.*

*“Stats NZ has strict embargo rules about tier one statistics such as gross domestic product. These figures are market sensitive and are never given to anyone in advance of the release day.”*

*“There is a short formal briefing for relevant government ministers in the hour before the release time of 10.45am on the day, but that is under strict embargo lock-up conditions,” Ms MacPherson says. “Even then ministers are not allowed to communicate the information to anyone else before 10.45am”.*

Stats NZ also responded to a tweet regarding the GDP release which can be found here - [https://twitter.com/Stats\\_NZ/status/1041817009615523840](https://twitter.com/Stats_NZ/status/1041817009615523840).

For further information, a summary of our process for information releases, embargoes, and sanctions can be found at the following link - <https://www.stats.govt.nz/about-us/legislation-policies-and-guidelines/information-releases-embargoes-and-sanctions/>. Stats NZ has very strict embargo policies, and no ‘hints’ are ever given.

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stats.govt.nz

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You have the right, by way of complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Act, to seek an investigation and review of this response to your request.

Stats NZ intends to publish its response to your request made under the Act on the Stats NZ website. This letter, with your personal details removed, will be published in its entirety. Consistent with the Act, publishing responses increases the availability of information to the public and helps promote balanced public debate.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MAB', followed by a horizontal flourish line.

Matthew Bloomer  
**Manager**  
**Office of the Government Statistician and Chief Executive**