



Dear

On 9 May 2017, your letter to the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information, was received:

- *Documentation relevant to:*
 - *Any consideration by the Ministry/Minister to changing the relevant forms and associated database to recognise another gender category*
 - *The decision not to change the system to recognise another gender category*
 - *The cost of changing the system to recognise another gender category.*

Significant changes to Ministry systems and resources are required to recognise gender diversity and record information in accordance with the Statistics New Zealand standards, available on the Statistics New Zealand website here: www.stats.govt.nz/methods/classifications-and-standards/classification-related-stats-standards/gender-identity.aspx.

Changing the relevant forms and associated database to recognise another gender was informally considered and the idea was socialised with various business units within the Ministry in 2014 and 2015, however at that time the work did not progress as the scale of the work was seen to be prohibitive.

The cost of changing the system to recognise another gender category was not specifically scoped at that time. There are a large number of systems used by the Ministry that capture gender data, as well as resources that would require changes. While specific costing was not undertaken, it was understood that the resources required would be considerable and unfortunately the work was unable to proceed.

There are no reports, briefings, or memos, nor a decision document from this time. As such, your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act as this information does not exist.

I can advise that the Ministry is currently considering a work programme to scope and cost changes to systems, tools and resources in order to meet the Statistics New Zealand standards for capturing gender data. There is one draft memo that sets out the Ministry's efforts to recognise gender diversity when providing services to clients, and options available to meet recommended standards for recording gender data. This memo is in its early form and is withheld under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Official Information Act as the content is under active consideration. The release of this

information is likely to prejudice the ability of government to consider advice and the wider public interest of effective government would not be served.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruth Bound', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Ruth Bound
Deputy Chief Executive, Service Delivery