



20 January 2023

Tēnā koe

On 24 November 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *How much has MSD spent on catering in 2022? Please provide total amount, a breakdown of the number of catered events/meetings this relates to, and what event/meeting/occasion the catering was for.*
- *How much has MSD spent on koha in 2022? Please provide total amount, a breakdown of the number of koha this relates to, and what event/meeting/occasion the koha was for.*

On 2 December and 12 December 2022, we emailed you seeking to clarify the date range for your request. Thank you for confirming you are seeking relevant information from 1 January 2022 to 30 November 2022.

On 20 December 2022 we emailed notifying you that an extension was necessary to allow for consultations to occur. The timeframe to respond to you was extended from 22 December 2022 to 20 January 2023.

Now turning to our response to your request, each of your questions will be responded to in turn:

- *How much has MSD spent on catering in 2022? Please provide total amount, a breakdown of the number of catered events/meetings this relates to, and what event/meeting/occasion the catering was for.*

The expenditure for catering sits within part of a wider general ledger account for events, venue hire, catering and other related services.

Events may include internally held workshops, focus group meetings, or training courses where staff may have come from other parts of New Zealand, and/or the duration of the workshop/training is half a day or more. Catering costs offset allowances that would otherwise have been payable to staff travelling from outside their immediate region to attend training or other workshops.

Due to the volume of the transactions involved, separating the catering from the non-catering related expenditure would require substantial manual collation. As such, I refuse this part of your request under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

However in the spirit of being helpful, the Ministry's expenditure from 1 January 2022 to 30 November 2022 for events, venue hire, catering and other related services was \$1,130,167.10.

With respect to the part of your question seeking a breakdown of the number of catered events/meetings this relates to, and what event/meeting/occasion the catering was for, this would require substantial manual collation to locate and prepare all instances within scope of your request. As such, I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

- *How much has MSD spent on koha in 2022? Please provide total amount, a breakdown of the number of koha this relates to, and what event/meeting/occasion the koha was for.*

The Ministry's koha expenditure from 1 January 2022 to 30 November 2022 was \$16,457.46. With respect to the part of your question seeking a breakdown of the number of koha this relates to, and what event/meeting/occasion the koha was for, this would require substantial manual collation to locate and prepare all instances within scope of your request. We normally only undertake a process to provide a breakdown of our koha payments once a year as part of our Annual Review process and would have to divert resources away from other priority work to undertake this request. As such, I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Act. The

greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry's website. Your personal details will be deleted, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

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.

Ngā mihi nui



Brad Young
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Finance