



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

Dear

On 21 July 2016 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, information regarding the landlord Ms Iskandar.

On 19 September 2016, the Ministry sent you a response to your request for:

- *All payments made to landlord "Debbie" Widharni Iskandar for the past five years broken down by rent and bond payments.*

The Ministry also notified you of its decision to grant the second part of your request in part:

- *MSD has said it became aware of concerns about Ms Iskandar 6 months ago. So what were those concerns and what action did MSD take as a consequence. Please provide copies of emails/documentation /reports or similar that outline these concerns or complaints and the action taken, including whether any concerns were referred to the police or council.*

The documents in the table overleaf have been identified as in scope of your request. You will note, some of these documents including some of their titles have been withheld in full.

Some information has been withheld from the documents under the following sections of the Official Information Act:

- Section 6(c) of the Act where making that information available would be likely to prejudice the maintenance of the law, including the prevention, investigation and detection of offences.
- Section 9(2)(a) of the Act in order to protect the privacy of natural persons where the need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information.
- Section 9(2)(g)(i) of the Act to protect the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions. I believe the greater public interest is in the ability of individuals to express opinions in the course of their duty.

You will note that some information has also been withheld as it is outside of the scope of your request.

You requested the information be released to you in the form of copies of emails/documentation/reports or similar. However, the Ministry cannot release some of the information in that form as this would prejudice the interests protected by the above sections of the Official Information Act. The Ministry has therefore decided to release some information to you in the form of a summary to satisfy the public interest in release of the information.

Documents in scope of your request

No.	Date	Title	Decision	OIA Section(s) under which information is withheld
1.	11 Jan 16	Document, title withheld	Withhold in full	9(2)(a)
2.	11 Jan 16	Email Correspondence, title withheld	Withhold in full	9(2)(a)
3.	13 Jan 16	Document, title withheld	Withhold in full	9(2)(a)
4.	14 Jan 16	Email Correspondence, title withheld	Withhold in full	9(2)(a)
5.	19 Jan 16	<i>Request for Information</i> from MSD to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment	Release in Part	9(2)(a), 6(c)
6.	8 March 16	Email, title withheld	Withhold in full	9(2)(a), 6(c)
7.	13 April 16	Email, <i>Non payment of Bonds-ISKANDAR</i>	Release in Part	9(2)(a)
8.	13 April 16	Intelligence Report <i>Non Lodgement of Bonds</i>	Withhold in full	9(2)(a), 6(c)
9.	20 May 16	Letter from the Office of Louisa Wall, <i>Bond issues to be aware of</i>	Release in Part	9(2)(a)
10.	23 May 16	Email correspondence with the Office of Louisa Wall, <i>Bond issues to be aware of</i>	Release in Part	9(2)(a)
11.	24 May 16	Email <i>re: Private Housing Provider</i>	Release in Part	9(2)(a)
12.	17 June 16	Intelligence Report, title withheld.	Withhold in full	9(2)(a), 6(c)
13.	21 July 16	Email correspondence from the Office of Louisa Wall <i>Landlady Widharni Iskandar</i>	Release in Part	9(2)(a)

No.	Date	Title	Decision	OIA Section(s) under which information is withheld
14.	26 July 16	Report, title withheld	Withhold in full	6(c), partially out of scope
15.	20 Jul 16	Email, <i>Urgent – media landlord/registered supplier</i>	Release in part	9(2)(a)
16.	20 Jul 16	Email, <i>RNZ Checkpoint query Debbie Widkarni Iskandar</i>	Release in part	9(2)(a)
17.	21 July 16	Responses to Minister's office questions	Release in part	9(2)(a)
18.	21 Jul 16	Email, <i>Landlord/supplier – details for the PM</i>	Release in part	9(2)(a), 9(2)(g)(i), out of scope
19.	22 Jul 16	Emails, <i>I-request_Iskandar.docx</i>	Release in part	9(2)(a)
20.	22 Jul 16	Email, <i>Case of Interest</i>	Release in part	9(2)(a), 6(c), 9(2)(g)(i)
21.	22 Jul 16	Email, <i>I-request_Iskandar.docx</i>	Release in part	9(2)(a)
22.	22 Jul 16	Email, <i>Sanctuary Homes</i>	Release in part	9(2)(a)
23.	22 Jul 16	Email, <i>Sanctuary homes</i>	Release in part	9(2)(a)
24.	22 Jul 16	Email, <i>Ms Iskandar</i>	Release in part	9(2)(a)
25.	17 August 2016	Email, <i>Fwd: Ms iskandar.</i>	Release in part	9(2)(a)
26.	23 August 2016	Email, <i>Re: Ms Iskandar</i>	Release in part	9(2)(a)
27.	23 August 2016	Email, <i>FWD: Iskandar update</i>	Release in part	9(2)(a)

On 11 January 2016, the Central Processing Unit for the Ministry received information from a third party that included concerns about Ms Iskandar as a landlord, especially around the eviction of tenants. Further information was received from the same third party on 13 January 2016. The Central Processing Unit responded by email to both of these pieces of correspondence on the day they were received. These pieces of correspondence to and from the Ministry are Documents 1-4 in the table. Documents 1-4 are withheld in full under section 9(2)(a) of the Act in order to protect the privacy of natural persons. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information. The public interest considerations of transparency and accountability are met through the release of the dates on which information was received and the subsequent actions taken.

The Central Processing Unit passed on the concerns in documents 1 and 3 to the Intelligence Unit on 11 January 2016. The email related to this transfer of concern is included in Document 6. Document 6 also contains an email from the Intelligence Unit to the third party in relation to Document 1 and 3. Document 6 is withheld in full under section 6(c) of the Act. The release of the document would be likely to prejudice the maintenance of the law, including the prevention, investigation and detection of offences. Document 6 is also withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act in order to protect the privacy of natural persons. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information. The Intelligence Unit commenced an investigation to see if any fraudulent activities had occurred against the Ministry.

On 13 January 2016, the Intelligence Unit Manager was alerted to the possibility of large scale fraud. The Unit Manager notified an Associate Deputy Chief Executive and a senior Adviser to the Deputy Chief Executive to the case, as was and is the current practice to notify of cases that pose a risk to the Ministry. A copy of this email is included in Document 20. There was no response to this email as it was a notification about a current investigation and did not require a reply.

On 14 January 2016, the Intelligence Analyst started to collate information relevant to the investigation into Ms Iskandar in her capacity as a registered supplier. As a part of the investigation a request for information was made to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) on 11 February 2016 regarding bonds lodged for addresses commonly used by Ms Iskandar in her capacity as a registered supplier. Document 5 is a copy of this request.

On 25 February 2016, MBIE responded to the request for information about bonds lodged for the properties in question. This response is out of scope of your request as it is not a complaint made to or action taken by the Ministry.

On 13 April 2016, the Ministry disseminated a report to MBIE (Document 8) regarding the non-lodgement of some of the bonds paid to Ms Iskandar in her capacity as a registered supplier, discovered as part of the investigation by the Intelligence Unit. Document 8 is withheld in full under section 9(2)(a) of the Act in order to protect the privacy of natural persons. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information. Document 8 is also withheld under section 6(c) of the Act as making the report available would be likely to prejudice the maintenance of the law, including the prevention, investigation and detection of offences. Document 7 is a copy of the email correspondence with MBIE in relation to the passing on of this information.

The Intelligence unit did not find any offending against the Ministry by Ms Iskandar in her capacity as a registered supplier. On 17 June 2016, the investigation was passed on from the Intelligence Unit to Fraud Intervention Services as it was felt that further response

and investigation was required by the Ministry to ensure vulnerable clients' entitlements remained correct and that they were not taken advantage of. Following the report being disseminated to MBIE, there was a delay in transferring the case from the Intelligence Unit to Fraud Intervention Services in Auckland. While it is not normal practice for this delay to be so long this needs to be balanced against the fact that Intelligence Unit found no offending against the Ministry by Ms Iskandar in her capacity as a registered supplier. As such, after concern about non-lodgement of bonds was passed on to MBIE, the priority given to the case was reasonably low.

Fraud Intervention Services have an on-going investigation into Ms Iskandar and as such the report from the Intelligence Unit to Fraud Intervention Services (Document 12) is withheld under section 6(c) of the Act. Making Document 12 available would be likely to prejudice the maintenance of the law, including the prevention, investigation and detection of offences. Document 12 is also withheld under 9(2)(a) of the Act in order to protect the privacy of natural persons. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information. There is another report generated by Fraud Intervention Services (Document 14) partially in scope of your request which is withheld under the same grounds.

Parallel to this investigation the Manurewa Service Centre had also been alerted to the information from a third party that included concerns about Ms Iskandar received by the Central Processing Unit on 11 January 2016 (Document 1 and 3). Around this time the Manurewa and Clendon Work and Income Service Centres had stopped directing clients to Ms Iskandar for accommodation purposes. The reason for this was due to a number of verbal complaints received from clients and concern about the quality of accommodation provided. The decision was made verbally between managers and staff and as such there are no documents to release in relation to this decision.

The Manurewa Service Centre advised that in early 2016 they had doubts that Ms Iskandar was lodging bonds due to staff feedback to the managers around clients' concerns about getting bonds returned by Ms Iskandar. Ms Iskandar visited the office with a client and a manager met with her to discuss the concerns. Ms Iskandar verbally confirmed that all bonds were being lodged with tenancy services.

On 20 May 2016, the Manurewa Service Centre received correspondence from the Office of Louisa Wall, Labour MP for Manurewa regarding concerns about a tenant of Ms Iskandar's who had been evicted. Document 9 is a copy of this letter and Document 10 is the associated emails between the Manurewa Service Centre and the Office of Louisa Wall. Document 13 is further correspondence from the Office of Louisa Wall updating the Manurewa Service Centre on the individual's case. The Manurewa Service Centre has advised that further discussion regarding this case was carried out in phone conversations.

Following the concerns raised by the Office of Louisa Wall and on-going concerns from the Service Centre Managers regarding Ms Iskandar as a registered supplier, the Service Centre Managers of the Manurewa and Clendon centres escalated their concerns to the Area Manager. Document 11 is a copy of these emails. Further discussion about the concerns was carried out verbally at the area meeting.

You may note that Document 11 makes reference to correspondence from another MP Secretary. This was by phone call and as such there are no documents to release in relation to this.

Following the media attention regarding Ms Iskandar as a registered supplier, the Minister's Office and journalists requested information from the Ministry. Emails and

documents that were generated as a result of this interest that outline concerns or complaints about Ms Iskandar or the action taken by the Ministry as a consequence were deemed to be in scope of your request. Documents 15-19 are answers provided to questions from the Minister or journalists.

Document 20 is the escalation of the issues regarding Ms Iskandar as a registered supplier from the manager of Organisational Intelligence to the Associate DCE of Organisational Solutions, recommending she be suspended as a registered supplier. Document 20 also contains an email from January 2016, as discussed earlier.

Document 21 is an email that outlines concerns about specific tenants given an eviction notice by Ms Iskandar and the action taken by the Ministry to assist them.

The decision to deregister Ms Iskandar as a supplier was made on 22 July 2016. Documents 22 and 23 are the emails surrounding this decision.

Following the deregistration of Ms Iskandar as a supplier, Work and Income contacted her tenants who were clients to assess their current accommodation arrangements and redirection or agent arrangements if applicable. The documents 24 to 27 are emails regarding the plan to contact the clients and the outcomes of the contact made.

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

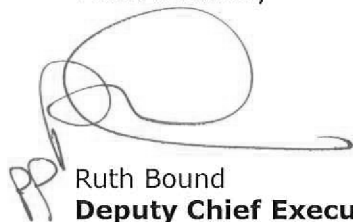
- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and attached documents available to the wider public after ten working days. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development'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 or decision with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this response and decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Ruth Bound', with a large, looping flourish at the end.

Ruth Bound
Deputy Chief Executive, Service Delivery