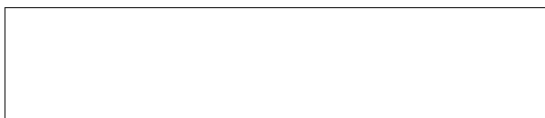




**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

25 AUG 2017



To whom it may concern,

On 13 August 2017 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *Is MSD actively monitoring, recording, or investigating those who have publicly admitted to benefit fraud under the "IAmMetiria" hashtag?*
- *If not, why not?*

The Ministry of Social Development takes its responsibilities very seriously in administering government expenditure to provide income assistance and services to more than one million New Zealanders each year. The Ministry works hard to protect the integrity of the system to ensure it remains fair for all New Zealanders.

The Ministry has a dedicated team of around 105 specialist fraud investigators throughout the country, and an Intelligence Unit that identifies emerging fraud risks and trends. The Ministry works with other government agencies and Intelligence Units and constantly seeks to improve its own systems to better prevent, detect and reduce incidences of benefit fraud.

Ministry investigators may from time to time use publicly available information from social media to build evidence that supports their enquiries about potential benefit fraud. However, social media, including the hashtag '#IAmMetiria', is not monitored as a means of detecting potential new cases.

The Ministry does not believe that monitoring social media would be an effective use of resources, which are better directed at sources where the information is able to be verified, and the provided evidence can be examined.

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.

Page 1 of 2

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider public shortly. 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 with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding the monitoring of social media, 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 be 'EB', written in a cursive style.

Elisabeth Brunt
General Manager, Ministerial and Executive Services