



04 AUG 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

On 7 July 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *What was the agency's total greenhouse gas footprint in the most recent year in which records exist (if such records exist)? Please provide a breakdown of those emissions if they are available?*
- *Does the agency have a policy of requiring employees and/or contractors to offset work-related emissions, e.g. domestic or international flights?*
- *Does the agency have an emissions reduction plan, or emissions reduction targets, either in place or in development? If so, please provide details of the plan and/or targets.*

The Ministry does not have one central record providing a breakdown of emissions, and therefore, we cannot provide you with our total greenhouse gas footprint. As such, this aspect of your request is refused under 18(g) as the information you have requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown.

You might be interested to note that most of the energy purchased by the Ministry is from electricity rather than fossil fuels. The Ministry uses an energy management supplier to advise on energy purchasing and has seen a 29 percent reduction in energy usage since the adopted reporting baseline from the 2007/2008 financial year. This includes data for Oranga Tamariki which was established in April 2017, and Child Youth and Family before that.

The Ministry has two electricity suppliers; Meridian, that uses only hydropower and wind generation, and Contact Energy, that has an 80 percent renewable supply and has reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent over the last five years. Both electricity supply contracts were part of all-of-government supply contracts. In some cases, the Ministry also uses energy purchased by the landlords of leased properties.

While the Ministry cannot provide you with its total emissions, you might be interested in the Ministry's Air Travel Carbon Emissions for the past two years. The figures are provided by Air New Zealand and are calculated on air travel distance for domestic and international travel. These figures are included below.

<b>Calendar Year</b>	<b>Carbon Credits/Units</b>
2018	1,859
2019	2,079

The Ministry pays Air Travel Carbon Emissions through FlyNeutral, a carbon offsetting programme. The scheme is verified by ClimateCare and provides the option to offset calculated emissions with Radiative Forcing. Carbon credits are captured by Air New Zealand, and FlyNeutral then acts on behalf of the organisations involved to offset the carbon emissions using carbon credits through one of two programmes. The first supports a blended portfolio of both New Zealand and offshore projects, with a price of \$25.90 per carbon credit. The second supports 100 percent New Zealand based projects, with a price of \$37.50 per carbon credit.

The Ministry has opted to offset travel emissions through Radiative Forcing, which is described by Air New Zealand as a 'multiplier' that takes account of the extra gases emitted to the atmosphere when flying at altitude, which are greater than burning fossil fuels at ground level. The Ministry has also chosen to offset its carbon credit through the 100 percent New Zealand credit-based programme, which sees the money for each carbon credit going towards native planting projects.

In regard to your second and third questions, the Ministry does not have a policy which requires employees and/or contractors to offset work-related emissions, nor does the Ministry have an emissions reduction plan. As such, these aspects of your request are refused under section 18(e) of the Act as the information you have requested does not exist.

The Ministry is developing a procurement strategy including recognising broader outcomes which will include environmental initiatives and expectations. For example, the Ministry has recently included carbon emissions as a key performance indicator in our cleaning and security contracts. While it is too early to show any results, the Ministry asks that contractors record carbon emissions when they commence work with the Ministry and track their performance.

The Ministry has begun replacing our existing fleet of Ministry vehicles with hybrid vehicles in the short to medium term and is currently exploring longer-term options to move towards, as far as practical, a zero-emission fleet by 2025/26, as mandated by the Government.

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

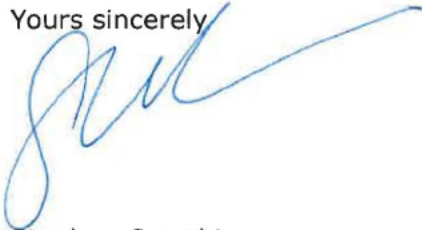
- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter public. 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](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response your request for information regarding the Ministry's greenhouse gas emissions, 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Stephen Crombie  
**Deputy Chief Executive, People and Capability**