

28 JAN 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

On 26 November 2019, you contacted the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *Any advice to the recent welfare policy advisory group on relationship rules for welfare benefits in other countries.*

In May 2018 the Government established the Welfare Expert Advisory Group (WEAG) to advise them on the future of New Zealand's social security system.

The WEAG took a participatory and independent approach, seeking input from people who interact with the welfare system. This involved a national consultation where they visited 16 regions around New Zealand, hearing from over 3000 people. This consultation was a critical part of the work of the WEAG, to hear the views of New Zealanders and to ensure that those views inform their work.

In addition to the national consultation, the WEAG were also informed by commissioned reports, reviews of relevant literature and data, as well as previous welfare reports.

On 26 February 2019 the WEAG provided its final advice to the Minister for Social Development. The Minister proceeded to develop a report to Cabinet providing an overview of the WEAG's recommendations, updating on progress to overhaul the welfare system and how the WEAG's report would inform future work, and seeking agreement for priority areas of work.

The WEAG report is titled Whakamana Tāngata – Restoring Dignity to Social Security in New Zealand. It can be found on the following link: www.weag.govt.nz/weag-report/.

The Ministry does not hold any advice that was provided to the WEAG on relationship rules for welfare benefits in other countries. Your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

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 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, 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



Polly Vowles
Manager, Welfare System and Income Support