

11 September 2023

s9(2)(a)

Mālō e lelei s9(2)(a)

## RESPONSE TO AN OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

On 11 August 2023, you contacted the Ministry for Pacific Peoples (the Ministry) requesting under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), information relating to gifts received by the outgoing Secretary for Pacific Peoples and attendees at the farewell. I have outlined your specific requests and my responses to each below.

- 1. The date or dates on which Mr Leauanae returned the gifts presented to him at his farewell, and confirmation that all the gifts were returned in usable condition.*
- 2. Confirmation of what was done with the returned gifts? Were they returned to the vendor(s)? if so was the full price recovered, and if not what was the estimated total loss to the taxpayer?*

As advised in the [Public Service Commission release](#), Mr Leauanae repaid the gifts on 3 March 2023 and returned the gifts on 7 March 2023. The gifts were returned in the condition they were provided and remain the property of the Ministry.

Our Secretary has accepted all the findings of the Commission's review and has since reviewed and strengthened the Ministry's policies and guidance on sensitive expenditure. The Ministry's financial controls, practices and conventions now better reflect the prudent use of public money. Key decisions about sensitive expenditure will be scrutinised and documented, and clear budgets will be set before any spending decisions are made.

- 3. The date or dates on which Mr Leauanae reimbursed MPP for the family and personal friend travel costs (as per the report) for his welcome to MCH?*

Mr Leauanae repaid the Ministry for travel costs associated with his pōwhiri at the Ministry for Culture and Heritage on 24 July 2023.

- 4. Copies of all correspondence with Mr Leauanae and with the Public Service Commission regarding these reimbursements.*

The Ministry does not have any written correspondence with Mr Leauanae or the Public Service Commission regarding the reimbursements. However, I have outlined in the table below a list of phone calls made to/from the Public Service Commission and to/from Mr Leauanae regarding

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### Auckland

9 Ronwood Ave, Manukau  
PO Box 97005, South Auckland Mail Centre 2240  
Phone: 09 265 3200  
Fax: 09 265 3202

### Wellington (National Office)

Level 1, ASB House  
101-103 The Terrace  
PO Box 833, Wellington 6140  
Phone: 04 473 4493  
Fax: 04 473 4301

### Christchurch

Level 1, BNZ Centre  
120 Hereford St  
Private Bag 4741  
Christchurch 8011  
Fax: 03 353 9499

PSC's review of the Ministry's sensitive expenditure. There are no transcripts available, however, all phone calls were broadly related to the review (including the matter of reimbursements). Please note that Mr Leauanae was no longer in the role of Secretary for Pacific Peoples when these communications took place.

**Table: List of phone calls regarding PSC's review of the Ministry's sensitive expenditure.**

Date	Call between
03/03/23	Secretary for Pacific Peoples and Mr Leauanae.
15/03/23	The Ministry's Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services and PSC.
31/03/23	The Ministry's Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services and PSC.
05/04/23	The Ministry's Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services and PSC.
12/06/23	The Ministry's Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services and PSC.
23/06/23	The Ministry's Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services and PSC.
20/07/23	The Ministry's Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services and PSC.

Please note that under section 15(1AA) of the OIA, if a request is amended or clarified after the date on which it is received, the department or organisation that receives the request may treat the amended or clarified request as a new request that, for the purposes of subsection (1), replaces the original request. On 14 August 2023, you asked us to add the following query to your request (note, this amended the due date for response to 11 September 2023):

5. *Can you please add to my OIA request the following... names and job titles of any representatives of the Public Service Commission and of other government departments who spoke at the farewell (noting that there is a strong public interest consideration at work here given the PSC investigation and the Commissioner's public statement).*

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[REDACTED] spoke as a representative from Public Service Chief Executives. In addition, two Senior Advisors from the Public Service Commission spoke at the farewell. Note, they spoke on behalf of the Pacific Public Servants Employee Led Network. I am withholding their names under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA to protect the privacy of natural persons. I am satisfied that there are no other public interest considerations that render it desirable to make the information withheld under section 9 of the OIA available.

In line with standard OIA practice, the Ministry proactively publishes some of its responses to OIA requests. As such, this letter may be published on the Ministry for Pacific Peoples' website. Your personal details will be removed, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you or your organisation.

Should you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact the Ministry at: [oia\\_requests@mpp.govt.nz](mailto:oia_requests@mpp.govt.nz). If you are dissatisfied with this response, you have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, 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 freephone 0800 802 602.

Mālō 'aupito



Ali Ajmal  
**Chief of Staff,  
Office of the Secretary**