

17 July 2024

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation, received on 30 May 2024, in which you asked for:

- * All initiatives, if any, that were submitted but not funded through Budget 2024.*
 - * All correspondence, if any, with the Minister of Finance's Office, including but not limited to letters, emails and text messages, regarding initiatives that were submitted but not funded through Budget 2024.*
 - * All correspondence, if any, with your Minister's Office, including but not limited to letters, emails and text messages, regarding initiatives that were submitted but not funded through Budget 2024.*
 - * All initiatives, if any, that were scaled for Budget 2024, including the initial funding request of the initiative and the final funded level.*
 - * All correspondence, if any, with the Minister of Finance's Office, including but not limited to letters, emails and text messages, regarding initiatives that were scaled for Budget 2024*
 - * All correspondence, if any, with your Minister's Office, including but not limited to letters, emails and text messages, regarding initiatives that were scaled for Budget 2024*
- Where you refuse to release a document, I request the name of the document and the reason that it was withheld.*

We have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982.

On 1 July 2024 we extended the timeframe to respond to your request to 17 July 2024 due to the consultation necessary.

We are releasing information about initiatives that proceeded and where final decisions have been made. We are withholding information about proposed savings that did not proceed, and material relating to 2025/26 onwards under section 9(2)(f)(iv) because releasing this information could prejudice future decision making.

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

1. *All initiatives, if any, that were submitted but not funded through Budget 2024.*

This aspect of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act as the information requested does not exist. For context there were no initiatives that were submitted but not funded through Budget 2024.

2. *All correspondence, if any, with the Minister of Finance's Office, including but not limited to letters, emails and text messages, regarding initiatives that were submitted but not funded through Budget 2024.*

This aspect of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act as the information requested does not exist. For context there were no initiatives that were submitted but not funded through Budget 2024.

3. *All correspondence, if any, with your Minister's Office, including but not limited to letters, emails and text messages, regarding initiatives that were submitted but not funded through Budget 2024.*

This aspect of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act as the information requested does not exist. For context there were no initiatives that were submitted but not funded through Budget 2024.

4. *All initiatives, if any, that were scaled for Budget 2024, including the initial funding request of the initiative and the final funded level.*

One request for new funding was scaled for Budget 2024. Funding for the initiative has been set aside in a tagged contingency. The initiative is still under active consideration and therefore documents related to it have been withheld in full under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Official Information Act.

One savings initiative was scaled. "Savings from enabling functions" the final savings totalled \$11.257 million. The initial level of savings submitted was \$13.724 million.

5. *All correspondence, if any, with the Minister of Finance's Office, including but not limited to letters, emails and text messages, regarding initiatives that were scaled for Budget 2024*

This aspect of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act as the information requested does not exist. For context there was no correspondence with the Minister of Finance's office about scaled initiatives.

6. *All correspondence, if any, with your Minister's Office, including but not limited to letters, emails and text messages, regarding initiatives that were scaled for Budget 2024*

The new funding initiative that was scaled is still under active consideration and therefore documents related to it have been withheld in full s 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Official Information Act.

Documents relating to savings from enabling functions are released in part and accompany our response for your reference. These documents are listed in the attached table.

I have decided to release the relevant parts of the documents listed in the attached table, subject to information being withheld under one or more of the following sections of the Official Information Act, as applicable:

- personal contact details of officials, under section 9(2)(a) – to protect the privacy of natural persons, including deceased people,
- advice still under consideration, section 9(2)(f)(iv) – to maintain the current constitutional conventions protecting the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers and officials,
- advice subject to legal privilege, under section 9(2)(h) - to maintain legal professional privilege,
- commercially sensitive information, under section 9(2)(i) - to enable a Minister of the Crown or any department or organisation holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities, and
- free and frank expression under section 9(2)(g)(i) – to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs.

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Official Information Act and determined there are no public interests that outweigh the grounds for withholding.

You are entitled to seek an investigation and review of my decision by writing to an Ombudsman as provided by section 28(3) of the Official Information Act.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) and attached documents may be published on the Department's website.

Nāku noa, nā



Siân Roguski
Director, Policy
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Table 1 - Schedule of documents released

Item	Date	Document description	Decision
1	7 December 2023	Ministerial Briefing - Vote Conservation Overview and Budget 2024	Released in part (s 9(2)(f)(iv))
2	26 January 2024	Savings table for feedback from MOC	Released in part (s 9(2)(f)(iv))
3	9 February 2024	Ministerial Briefing - Proposed Initiatives for Budget 2024	Released in part (s 9(2)(f)(iv))
4	16 February 2024	Letter to Minister of Finance on Budget 24 initiatives	Released in part (s 9(2)(f)(iv))
5	1 March 2024	Meeting memo – Budget 2024 Bilateral with the Minister of Finance	Released in part (s 9(2)(f)(iv))
6	13 March 2024	Portfolio Savings Summary	Released in part (s 9(2)(f)(iv))
7	13 March 2024	Memo - Options to reduce the impact of savings on frontline staff	Released in part (s 9(2)(f)(iv))
8	2 April 2024	Summary of Proposed Department of Conservation People Change to meet Savings Target and Cost Pressures 2024/25	Released in full
9	5 April 2024	Memo - Updated cost pressure forecasts and impact on proposed reduction to DOC's Baseline Reduction Target	Released in part (s 9(2)(f)(iv))
10	30 May 2024	Budget 2024 – Vote: Conservation Key messages and Q&A and Factsheets	Released in part (s 9(2)(f)(iv))

Table 2 - Schedule of documents withheld in full

Item	Date	Document description	Decision
11	28 February 2024	Ministerial Briefing - title withheld (relates to scaled new funding initiative)	Withheld in full (s 9(2)(f)(iv))
12	29 April 2024	Cabinet Paper – title withheld (relates to scaled new funding initiative)	Withheld in full (s 9(2)(f)(iv))
13	30 April 2024	Cabinet Paper talking points - title withheld (relates to scaled new funding initiative)	Withheld in full (s 9(2)(f)(iv))
14	8 May 2024	Cabinet Paper – title withheld (relates to scaled new funding initiative)	Withheld in full (s 9(2)(f)(iv))
15	Various	Emails relating to scaled new funding initiative	Withheld in full (s 9(2)(f)(iv))