

Open Government Partnership New Zealand

National Action Plan 2018-2020

Progress report: June 2020

Commitment 7: Official information

Lead agency: Ministry of Justice and the State Services Commission




Objective: To improve the availability of official information by:

- providing advice to the Government on whether to initiate a formal review of official information legislation
- progressively increasing the proactive release of official information by publishing responses to requests for information made under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). This commitment builds on work - undertaken as part of the National Action Plan 2016-2018 - on official information to make information more accessible, which promotes good government and trust and confidence in the State Services.

Ambition: New Zealanders:

- can have confidence that the regulation of official information remains fit-for-purpose
- have equitable access to official information released in response to specific requests.

OGP values: Public Participation, Transparency, Accountability

Milestones		Progress
1	Test the merits of undertaking a review of the Official Information Act 1982 and provide and publish advice to Government <i>Start date: Following the report back of the Privacy Bill</i> <i>End date: September 2019</i>	
2	Achieve a measurable increase in the proactive publication of official information request responses <i>Start/End dates: October 2018 to June 2020</i>	
3	Implement a policy to publish Cabinet papers proactively within 30 days of final decisions, unless there are good reasons to withhold specific papers <i>Start/End dates: October 2018 to June 2019</i>	

Progress key:



some delays



underway



completed

WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DOING

Milestone 1:

- The Ministry reported to the Minister in September 2019.
- The Minister of Justice has indicated interest in a potential review of the Act, subject to Cabinet decisions on the scope and timing of a review of the Act. A decision on the scope and timing of a review will be made in the next Parliamentary term.

Milestone 2:

- The Official Information Act Statistics released in March 2020 continue to show a measurable increase in the number of responses published by agencies. Agencies published 1,788 responses from July to December 2019, compared to 1,654 in the previous reporting period to June 2019. This represents an 8.1% increase in six months, and a 57% increase on the six-month period to December 2018 (during which 1,138 were published).

Milestone 3:

- This Milestone has been completed.

HOW WE ARE INCLUDING DIVERSE VOICES

Milestone 1:

- The consultation was publicly available through the Ministry of Justice Consultation Hub.
- The Ministry identified and emailed interested individuals and organisations, including those representing minority groups, inviting them to make written submissions. They also encouraged them to forward the invitation to others.

HOW WE ARE KEEPING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES INFORMED

Milestone 1:

- The Minister of Justice has indicated interest in a potential review of the Act, subject to Cabinet decisions on the scope and timing of a review of the Act. A decision on the scope and timing of a review will be made in the next Parliamentary term.

Milestone 2:

- The SSC's reports on OIA Statistics are published 6-monthly on the SSC website and include statistics on agencies' proactive publication of responses to official information requests. We are exploring the addition of the data to the SSC page on www.data.govt.nz. This would take the form of a CSV file to make the data easier to re-use.

Milestone 3:

- The Cabinet paper establishing the policy, and associated advice, has been published on the SSC website. The Cabinet Office Circular is published in HTML on the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet website.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Milestone 1

- The Minister of Justice has indicated interest in a potential review of the Act, subject to Cabinet decisions on the scope and timing of a review of the Act. A decision on the scope and timing of a review will be made in the next Parliamentary term.

Milestone 2

- The next OIA statistics collection will take place in July 2020, for publication in September.

Milestone 3:

- SSC continues to support agencies publication of Cabinet papers as required. In agreeing to the proactive release of Cabinet Papers Cabinet asked for a review of effectiveness and impact to be carried out during 2019. The findings of this initial review are yet to be considered by Cabinet.

LINKS – EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS AND MILESTONES ACHIEVED

Milestone 1 - <https://www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/have-your-say/>

Milestone 2 - <https://ssc.govt.nz/resources/latest-oia-statistics-released-dec2019/>

Milestone 3 - <https://dpmc.govt.nz/publications/co-18-4-proactive-release-cabinet-material-updated-requirements>