

Open Government Partnership New Zealand

National Action Plan 2018-2020

Progress report: September 2019

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 of Justice received 286 written submissions and conducted discussions with 8 people with specific expertise and interest. People were asked for their views on key issues with the OIA, whether these relate to the legislation or practice, and what reforms would make the biggest difference.
- The Submissions have been released under the Official Information Act.
- The Ministry has analysed the submissions, noting emerging themes, such as scope, compliance, timeliness, and oversight.
- The Ministry reported to the Minister in September 2019.

Milestone 2:

- The Official Information Act Statistics for the six months to June 2019 were published in September 2019.
- They saw a 45% increase in the number of OIA responses published compared to the six months to December 2018 (up from 1,138 to 1,654). Responses were published by 47 agencies during the reporting period, compared to 42 in the previous six months. This is on top of the increasing amount of official information being proactively released by agencies.

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 Ministry will publish the written submissions on its website in due course.

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.

Milestone 3:

- The Cabinet paper establishing the policy, and associated advice, has been published on the SSC website, and the Cabinet Office Circular is published on the DPMC Website.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Milestone 1

- The Minister of Justice has considered the Ministry's report and will consult with his colleagues on proposals to progress a review.
- The next steps and timeframe will be determined following consultation.

Milestone 2

- The next statistics collection will take place in January 2020, for publication in March.

Milestone 3:

- In agreeing to the proactive release of Cabinet Papers Cabinet asked for a review of effectiveness and impact to be carried out later this year. Planning for this review is underway.

LINKS – EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS AND MILESTONES ACHIEVED

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

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

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