

Open Government Partnership New Zealand

National Action Plan 2018-2020

Progress report: 1 July – 30 September 2020

Commitment 7: Official information

Lead agency: Ministry of Justice and the Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service 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 latest Official Information Act (OIA) statistics for 115 government agencies, covering the period January to June 2020, were released in September 2020. Overall, agencies responded to 19,406, or 97.3%, of requests on time. Agencies published 1,233 OIA responses from January to June 2020, compared to 1,788 in the previous reporting period to December 2019. It is noted that public service was implementing the Government's COVID-19 response effort during the January to June 2020 reporting period. The number of OIA responses published remains 8.4% up on the first six-month period of the National Action Plan period, which ran 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 Commission's reports on OIA Statistics are published 6-monthly on its website and include statistics on agencies' proactive publication of responses to official information requests. In addition to releasing the data in Excel files, the data is

available in an online tool that allows the user to customise and download OIA data.

- In September 2020, the full dataset going back to 2015/16 was made available as a CSV file on both the Commission's website and on www.data.govt.nz.
- A new dataset showing the publishing locations of agencies' OIA responses (where agencies use a centralised publication model), is also now available on the Commission's proactive release webpage and www.data.govt.nz.

Milestone 3:

- The Cabinet paper establishing the policy, and associated advice, and a 30 working day calculator have been published on the Commission's website. The Cabinet Office Circular is published in HTML on the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet website.
- A dataset showing the publishing locations of agencies' Cabinet papers (where agencies use a centralised publication model), is also now available on the Commission's proactive release webpage and www.data.govt.nz.

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 covering the period July to December 2020 will take place in January 2021, for publication in March.

Milestone 3:

- The Commission continues to provide advice agencies on the publication of Cabinet papers as required. To support embedding of the policy the Commission intends to ask agencies to provide to the Commission data on their publication of papers on behalf of ministers, and is exploring an option for a centralised platform for the publication of Cabinet papers.

LINKS – EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS AND MILESTONES ACHIEVED

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

Milestone 2 - <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/resources/latest-oia-statistics-released-jan-june-2020/>

<https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/resources/official-information-proactive-release/>

<https://catalogue.data.govt.nz/dataset/official-information>

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

<https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/resources/official-information-proactive-release/>