

# Open Government Partnership New Zealand

## National Action Plan 2018-2020

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

Progress key:



some delays



underway



completed

#### WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DOING

#### Milestone 1:

- On 13 March 2019 the Justice Committee reported back on the Privacy Bill.
- Between 8 March and 3 May 2019 the Ministry of Justice carried out public and targeted consultation on access to official information. They asked people's views on key issues with the OIA, whether these relate to the legislation or practice, and what reforms would make the biggest difference.
- 286 written submissions were received and 8 key discussions were carried out with people with specific expertise and interest.

#### Milestone 2:

- The Official Information Statistics for the six months to December 2018 were published in March 2019.
- In the last six months, 42 agencies published OIA responses on their websites, up from 26 in the previous six months. The number of responses published has gone from 375 last period to 1,138, a 203% increase. This is on top of the increasing amount of official information being proactively released by agencies.

#### Milestone 3:

- This Milestone was achieved in the previous period.

### **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, is published on the SSC website, and the Cabinet Office Circular is published on the

## WHAT'S NEXT?

Milestone 1

- The Ministry of Justice is currently analysing submissions, noting emerging themes, such as scope, compliance, timeliness, and oversight.
- They will provide advice to the Minister of Justice by September 2019. Note, this new end date differs from that set out in the Action Plan.

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>