

18 MAR 2020

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Jordan Williams

By email: Jordan@taxpayers.org.nz
Ref: H202001145

Dear Mr Williams

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your follow up request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) on 4 March 2020 for:

"That raises the obvious questions:

- 1. Is the Ministry aware of any staff traveling to or via China since 2 February 2020 for any reason other than on Ministry business?*
- 2. Of those, how many returned to places of work (such as visiting the office or socialising with staff) within 14 days of leaving China?"*

The Ministry has not actively recorded or captured personal travel of staff and Ministry staff have not been required to inform the Ministry of their plans when they take annual leave. As such, the Ministry is unable to report whether staff have undertaken personal travel to or via China during the period of 2 February 2020 to 4 March 2020 (being the date of your request).

In order to provide information pertaining to your request, a substantial amount of manual research and collation would be involved as every Ministry staff member would need to be consulted. As such, your request for this information is refused under section 18(f) of the Act. However, I have confirmed that neither the Corporate Services Deputy Director-General, who is responsible for the Ministry's Human Resources, or I are aware of any such travel.

A large amount of information is provided to Ministry staff and to other agencies and the public. Ministry staff have been kept informed about COVID-19 and have been receiving updates since 28 January 2020. This information is continuously updated, and the latest updates are available at the following address: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>.

Under section 28 of the Act, you may ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Turner
Deputy Director-General
Office of the Director-General