



15 August 2024

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

Ref: OIA-2024/25-0054

Dear [Redacted]

Official Information Act request relating to the Aide-Memoire dated 9 February 2024

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 18 July 2024. You requested:

"OIA 2023/24 – 0836

Noting the passage of time, I would like to make a fresh request for this document (ie reconsideration of the redacted passages)."

I have reassessed the previously published paper. I have decided to release the document listed below, subject to information being withheld under the following sections of the Act:

- section 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of the individual; and
- section 9(2)(g)(i), to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion.

Date	Document description	Decision
9 February 2024	Aide Memoire: Meeting with Public Service Leadership Team, 12 February 2024	Release with some information withheld under: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Section 9(2)(a)• Section 9(2)(g)(i)

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Act. No public interest has been identified that would be sufficient to outweigh the reasons for withholding that information.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

This response will be published on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's website during our regular publication cycle. Typically, information is released monthly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted Signature]

Clare Ward
Executive Director
Strategy, Governance and Engagement



Aide-Memoire

MEETING WITH PUBLIC SERVICE LEADERSHIP TEAM, 12 FEBRUARY 2024

To	Prime Minister (Rt Hon Christopher Luxon) Minister of Finance and Minister for the Public Service (Hon Nicola Willis)	Report No	DPMC-2023/24-757
From	Rebecca Kitteridge, Secretary for the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet	Date	9/02/2024

Purpose

- You are meeting the Public Service Leadership Team (PSLT) on Monday, 12 February 2024. This Aide Memoire provides:
 - some background information about the PSLT;
 - the logistics for this meeting; and
 - suggested outline talking points for you both.
- Please call me s9(2)(a) if you have any questions or requests.

Background

- The PSLT collectively leads and provides stewardship for the Public Service. Public Service chief executives have met fortnightly for many years, but they have convened as the Public Service Leadership Team since 2016, and the PSLT now has statutory recognition in the Public Service Act 2020.
- The PSLT has 48 members, including two Deputy Public Service Commissioners, all departmental secretaries, the Chief of Defence Force, the Police Commissioner and chief executives of some of the larger Crown Entities. **Attached** at the end of this briefing are photographs and short biographical information on the PSLT members. Members are appointed by the Public Service Commissioner.
- The PSLT meets in two ways:
 - Short fortnightly team meetings** focus on free and frank situational awareness, and how we're doing in advancing the government's programme. The Secretary for DPMC chairs these team meetings.

- b. **Retreats** every three or four months provide an opportunity for strategic reflection, problem solving and sharing of best practice. Retreats are run by the PSC.
6. The team spirit and relationships that develop in the PSLT are invaluable in supporting collaboration, resource-sharing, and support. The fact that we meet as a team so regularly and with such focus is the envy of public service heads in other like-minded jurisdictions.
7. PSLT meetings also provide a unique environment for senior politicians such as you to communicate your vision and expectations, and to engage with the leaders of the Public Service. Such sessions are hugely helpful in getting the whole of the Public Service onto the same page.

Logistics

8. As Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service/Minister of Finance, you have agreed to meet with the PSLT for 45 minutes on Monday. It is an out-of-session meeting. The Secretary of DPMC Rebecca Kitteridge and Deputy Public Service Commissioner Heather Baggott will meet you on the ground floor reception of the Reserve Bank Building and will escort you (individually or together) to the Public Service Commission's boardroom.
9. We are proposing that the Prime Minister speak first, followed by the Minister for the Public Service/Minister of Finance. If there is time, the PSLT would appreciate the opportunity to ask you questions. The proposed agenda is as follows:
 - Welcome and Introduction: Rebecca Kitteridge (5.00-5.02pm)
 - Comments from the Prime Minister (5.02-5.20pm)
 - Comments from the Minister for the Public Service/Minister of Finance (5.20-5.35pm)
 - Questions and Answers (5.35-5.45pm)
 - Concluding comments and acknowledgements: Rebecca Kitteridge (5.45pm)

Talking Points

10. The PSLT is keen to hear directly from you. You will find them eager to understand your direction of travel so they can most effectively deliver for you. They will appreciate hearing about your priorities, the ways that you are proposing to make this happen, and how you would like to work with them.
11. Suggested talking points are provided in Annex A (Prime Minister) and Annex B (Minister for the Public Service and Minister of Finance).

Rebecca Kitteridge
Secretary for the Department of
Prime Minister and Cabinet

Annex A: Proposed talking points for the Prime Minister

1: Introduction and purpose

- It's great to be here. Thank you for all your efforts in supporting the new government for our first 75 days in office – I know a lot of you have really pulled out all the stops to support the 100 day programme – 25 days to go so keep it up!
- I'm glad to have the opportunity to speak with you.
- We've just got into government – there are lots of impressions floating around.
- I'd like to use this session so you can hear directly from me about the approach I intend to take to government. And I'm keen to hear your perspectives too.
- I'm going to talk today about:
 - The **why**: the need for a turnaround;
 - The **what**: focus on priorities and targets;
 - The **how**: how we're going to get there.

2: The “why” of the turnaround

- I've been out talking to lots of Kiwis, getting a clear message that people aren't happy with the direction we're heading in – so significant changes are required.
- Kiwis also want results – I'm hearing that people want action/outcomes they can see and feel, that make a difference to their lives.
- I'm calling this work we're embarking on a 'turnaround' because it's a good shorthand for the magnitude of the change.
- I know we can make New Zealand a more prosperous, and stronger/more resilient/ more internationally connected country, and I know we can pull this off.
 - Requires very high ambition / aspiration.
 - BUT not out of reach – we have lots of strengths and areas of good potential.

3: The “what” – priorities and targets

- I want this government to be known as the government that delivers.
- Delivering this turnaround will require discipline and focus by the public sector.

s9(2)(g)(i)

- To continue delivering after the 100-day plan, we'll need:
 - **Clear priorities:**
 - Priorities, agreed between your Ministers and me, which allow us to set clear goals, with milestones and deliverables;
 - These priorities will shape the Government's agenda and will follow directly on from the first 100 day plan.

○ **Targets:**

- As you know, I also intend to set a set of targets across critical areas like health, education, the economy, and law and order – this will ensure our focus is on things that really matter to New Zealanders.
- I intend to own these targets and drive them (with support from DPMC), and they'll be a real focus for me throughout my term.
- I have huge aspirations for NZ, so I won't apologise for setting ambitious targets in certain areas.
- Targets are a visible way of knowing whether the effort going on underneath the surface is making people's lives better:
 - for example, it's unacceptable that people have to wait 12 or more hours in emergency departments;
 - I know there are underlying causes of these delays – and if we have to tackle those to reach the target, that's what we'll do.
- I want to see clear progress and the right direction of travel. Because they are deliberately stretch targets we might not hit them all, but the progress that we do make will make a difference to New Zealanders' lives. And if we've made great progress, and done everything we can, I'm prepared to front that.

4: The “how”: how we're going to get there

- **Focus on delivery and monitoring** – I want to know every quarter exactly where we're up to, the risks and obstacles, and if we're off track what's our pathway to getting back on track. DPMC will support me in keeping this relentless focus on delivery.
- **Fiscal discipline** – I want to be clear and upfront that the turnaround is not a funding exercise. We can't fix this through the Budget. We have very limited fiscal headroom, we need to drive efficiency, especially through the public sector – and want to make sure every dollar spent is working hard / helping to drive outcomes.
- **Ruthless prioritisation / making tough choices** – I'm up for the conversations we will need to have about making hard choices along the way – constrained fiscal environment requires difficult trade-offs, some programmes will need to end for us be able to deliver on the most important priorities.
- **Getting an outside-in perspective** – this will have to be a collaborative effort. I really want to see this government being informed by the perspectives and expertise not just of the public sector but also externally – for example the business community.

Close out:

I'm really excited about the future of this country and about helping New Zealand be the absolute best it can be and am confident that as a team we can achieve that.

Hand over to Minister Willis and say you'll invite questions after she has spoken.

Annex B: Proposed talking points for the Minister for the Public Service and Minister of Finance – provided by the Treasury and the Public Service Commission

- Acknowledge and recognise the Chief Executives:
 - Important role they play to achieve this Government's priorities, reiterate PM's messages on delivery to date.
 - Ability to be agile, responsive, and focussed on what communities need.
 - Pace of change and shifts they are managing and will need to continue to.
- Key shifts (looking to the PSLT to lead and support the Government):
 - Clear, defined, government priorities and measures of success.
 - Social investment approach:
 - To evaluate areas of existing social sector spending to better understand the return New Zealanders are getting from current social sector spending.
 - How it contributes to the process of redirecting lower-quality spending to areas where better outcomes are expected
 - Enable more community led solutions - devolution and localised delivery, and what you see that looking like.
 - Culture of responsible spending, fiscal discipline and right-sizing the government's footprint.
- Importance to keep focussed on public trust and confidence - principles of integrity, transparency and political neutrality remain a priority.
- Outline the Government's focus to restore fiscal discipline and embed a culture of responsible spending across government, noting the fiscal position is likely to be constrained for some time.
- Highlight Budget 24 as the key near-term opportunity to deliver on the Government's fiscal sustainability programme, which is focused on two interrelated objectives:
 - Creating sufficient fiscal headroom to fund the Government's policy commitments and achieve fiscal strategy; and
 - Orienting the Government to prioritise fiscal discipline and embed a culture of continuously improving value for money.
- Acknowledge the effort that CEs and their agencies are making to support their Ministers to achieve the Government's fiscal objectives. In particular, the work undertaken to identify savings options, which will be formally submitted on 16 February.
- Share your reflections on what you are seeing from the Assurance panel process, including that there will be some tough decisions to take to land a Budget package in line with our fiscal objectives (particularly for FY 2024/25).
- Outline key expectations through Budget 24, that:

- Ministers have been asked to challenge their agencies on their ability to deliver savings, and to specifically ensure that any additional savings and revenue options have been offered.
- This includes an expectation of looking below appropriation level – e.g. costs of individual programmes of works and contestable funds.
- You have asked the Treasury to apply a high bar in assessing initiatives, with a focus on ensuring that Budget Ministers are provided with the highest level of sustainable savings and revenue options possible.
- With regards to new spending, your expectation that agencies are reprioritising to meet any critical cost pressures and Government priorities – this includes the targets set by the Prime Minister and priorities set by Ministers for their agencies. While certain agencies have been invited to submit cost pressures or new spending initiatives, retention of savings or new funding for these is not guaranteed – decisions will be taken at a package level in terms of relative priority.
- The submissions you have prepared for your Minister should be clear on the key priorities, trade-offs and risks for your agency (including where early decisions are key to delivering savings) and ensure that your Minister is well-positioned to front these issues with Budget Ministers.
- You expect CEs to have interrogated the relative value for money and priority of initiatives internally, and strength-tested these with the Treasury ahead of submission.
- *If raised on Budget early decisions:* Reinforce that Budget is going to involve a significant number of trade-offs for Ministers between savings and expenditure initiatives. Unless there is a compelling case for early decisions (ie integral to delivering the overall package) decisions will be undertaken together as per usual processes.