



6 April 2022

Ref: OIA 2122-1786

Privacy of natural persons

Tēnā koe Privacy of natural persons

Thank you for your email of 10 March 2022 to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), the following information:

- 1. Copies of any communications sent since 1 January 2020 to your communications staff/ media advisors about their handling of media enquiries.*
- 2. Copies of any communications sent since January 1 2020 to your communications staff about the handling of OIA requests from members of the media.*

You explained that the communications you are seeking could include “advice, guidance or instructions on how to handle media enquiries or OIA requests from the media”.

Response

Given the volume of OIA requests and media enquiries that MBIE’s communications staff are involved in across the business, we have interpreted your request as seeking broad advice, guidance or instructions on how to handle those information requests – as opposed to case-specific guidance. Communications about the handling of an individual request, or group of related requests, would therefore not fall in scope of our response.

The guidance, advice and instructions that MBIE currently has in place (and has had in place since before 1 January 2020) are internal policies for handling OIA requests and media enquiries, as well as MBIE’s Media Guidelines. We have attached both the policies and the media guidelines in response to your information request. If you have any questions or issues with this decision, you are welcome to get back in touch.

You will note that, for the MBIE News Media Policy (see Appendix 1), a review was scheduled for 1 July 2020. This was postponed due to Covid-related demands on the Communications team. The review is expected to be completed by the end of 2022.

You also have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping, fluid strokes that form a stylized, somewhat abstract shape.

Karin Schofield

General Manager Engagement, Communications and Ministerial Services

Ngā Pou o te Taumaru

Document schedule

Documents released

Question #	Date	Description
1	July 2017	MBIE News Media Policy
2	August 2017	MBIE OIA Policy
1 & 2	August 2017	MBIE Media Guidelines



**MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,
INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT**
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI



News Media Policy

July 2017

News Media policy

Purpose

This policy outlines the principles underpinning the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's (the Ministry) approach to news media engagement. It should be read in conjunction with the [Media guidelines](#) which will help staff develop and maintain effective engagement with the news media.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, temporary or permanent, employed or engaged by the Ministry on any basis in any country.

This policy applies to all interactions with news media through various approved channels, including Social Media channels.

For information about the administration and operation of MBIE social media channels, please refer to the Social Media Policy.

Help

Any news media query or engagement must be directed to the MBIE Engagement & Communications Team which is the first point of contact for all news media enquiries. The team can be contacted at media@mbie.govt.nz and 027 442 2141.

Definition of Terms

News Media – News media should be interpreted as any individual or organisation that meet the following criteria;

- A significant element of their publishing activities involves the generation and/or aggregation of news, information and opinion of current value.
- They disseminate this information to a public audience. Dissemination can be by print, electronic or digital means.

Social media – means websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.

News Media Policy

Date of issue: 1 July 2017

Approved: Chief Executive

Policy Author: Senior Engagement and Communications Advisor, ECoMS

Next Review: 1 July 2020

Policy Owner: General Manager, ECoMS

News Media policy

Policy statements

Relationship with the news media

- The news media is a key stakeholder for the Ministry and has a legitimate interest in its activities.
- The news media also play a critical role in the Ministry communicating with the public and other stakeholders. The news media provides scrutiny and supports transparency and accountability of our activities.
- Being able to communicate our story through the news media helps the public to better understand what the Ministry does, which assists us to operate more effectively.
- The news media can enhance or detract from the Ministry's reputation (and that of our Ministers).
- The Ministry is committed to being accessible, transparent, knowledgeable and credible in its interactions with the news media. We want to manage our engagement with the media constructively, promptly, and professionally.

Media engagement

- The Engagement and Communications Team within the Engagement, Communications and Ministerial Services (ECoMS) Branch is the first point of contact for the news media in reactive and proactive situations. This ensures the appropriate spokespeople are utilised, communications are coordinated and approved signoffs achieved.
- Responses to news media inquiries should be given priority and should be as prompt as reasonably practicable, taking into consideration complexity, reputational risk, confidentiality concerns and the operating environment of 'no surprises' with Ministers.
- The Engagement & Communications Team will inform relevant managers and staff and keep them up-to-date with follow-up news media questions or ongoing requests.
- The Engagement & Communications Team will keep a formal log of news media enquiries, responses and who signed them off.
- In some instances, it will be more appropriate to treat a news media request as either an Official Information Act or Privacy Act request.

News Media Policy

Date of issue: 1 July 2017

Approved: Chief Executive

Policy Author: Senior Engagement and Communications Advisor, ECoMS

Next Review: 1 July 2020

Policy Owner: General Manager, ECoMS

News Media policy

- Ministry staff have the right to interact with the news media as private individuals, as long as doing so does not interfere with their official duties, or negatively reflect on the standing or integrity of the Ministry (see the [State Services Code of Conduct](#))

Spokespeople

- The Ministry will name spokespeople in the interests of transparency, unless there is a good reason not to.
- The Engagement & Communications Team will work with the business to determine designated Ministry spokespeople who can engage with news media. Only designated spokespeople are authorised to engage with news media.
- When acting as a Ministry spokesperson, staff must not express personal views to news media. These may discredit the Ministry or impair its effectiveness. Staff must maintain public service neutrality at all times. (See the [MBIE Code of Conduct](#)). This does not preclude relevant staff whose role it is to provide professional opinion (e.g. the Chief Economist) providing views to news media in that capacity.

Signoff

- Sign-off on communications with news media must be sought from the relevant Tier 3 manager (General Manager - GM) or someone they have delegated this responsibility to. The relevant GM and a member of the Engagement & Communications team (with appropriate delegation from an Engagement and Communications Manager or Principal) will decide if/when they need to refer a proposed response to the Deputy Chief Executive (DCE) or Chief Executive (CE), or advise the Minister's office.

Key Accountabilities and Responsibilities

To ensure that the Ministry manages engagement with news media effectively, the following accountabilities and responsibilities are in place:

- Spokespeople will be designated by the relevant DCE or GM in consultation with the Engagement & Communications Team – either on an ongoing or one-off basis, depending on the issue.
- The Engagement & Communications Team will work with the relevant business unit in the development of communications material.
- Engagement with news media (reactive and proactive) will be facilitated via the Engagement & Communications Team.
- Only designated Ministry spokespeople will be authorised to speak to the news media.

News Media Policy

Date of issue: 1 July 2017

Approved: Chief Executive

Policy Author: Senior Engagement and Communications Advisor, ECoMS

Next Review: 1 July 2020

Policy Owner: General Manager, ECoMS

News Media policy

- All DCEs and GMs are responsible for ensuring this policy is adhered to.
- A breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action, depending on the level of the breach.

Role	Description of Responsibility
Chief Executive (CE)	Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of this policy and procedures. • The Ministry meeting its obligations under this policy.
Senior Leadership Team (SLT)	Responsible for reviewing and endorsing this policy and associated procedures, or recommending changes to the policy.
Deputy Chief Executives	Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding this policy in their groups. • Ensuring their business groups are compliant with this policy.
Policy Owner (GM ECoMS)	Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the policy is working effectively through regular monitoring and reporting of compliance to the policy. • Promoting awareness of this policy, in particular during orientation for new staff, during election periods and at times of reputational sensitivity.
ECoMS branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages all news media enquiries and liaises with the business on an appropriate response/engagement. • Monitors, records and analyses news media interactions. • Assists and advises the business on news media engagement/strategies/tactics. • Provides advice to DCEs, GMs (or delegates) on appropriateness of staff to be Ministry spokespeople. • Provides advice or assistance with Official Information Act or Privacy Act requests as appropriate. • Liaises with Ministers' offices as appropriate.
General Managers or	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in developing key messages in conjunction with ECoMS as required.

News Media Policy

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News Media policy

delegates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sign off responses to news media and escalate requests or responses to their DCE as appropriate.
Designated spokespeople	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are adequately prepared/briefed to engage with news media.• Adhere to agreed messages.• Maintain public service neutrality at all times.• Are constructive, prompt and professional in engagements with news media.
Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure staff are aware of and comply with this policy, and that all news media requests and interactions are referred through the correct channel.
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refer all news media requests to the Engagement & Communications Team via media@mbie.govt.nz or 027 442 2141.• Advise their managers that they have received a news media request or have been approached by news media.

Mandatory Procedures

- [Media Guidelines](#)

Related MBIE policies and documents

- [Official Information Act Requests Policy](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Social Media Policy](#)
- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Record Management Policy](#)

Relevant legislation and regulations

- Official Information Act 1982
- Privacy Act 1993
- Defamation Act 1992
- Copyright Act 1994

News Media Policy

Date of issue: 1 July 2017

Approved: Chief Executive

Policy Author: Senior Engagement and Communications Advisor, ECoMS

Next Review: 1 July 2020

Policy Owner: General Manager, ECoMS

News Media policy

- Public Records Act 2005

Measures of success

The Engagement & Communications Team regularly monitors and evaluates how well the news media policy is working. The measures of success are that:

- News media queries are given priority and receipt is acknowledged on the same day if received between 6am and 10pm on business days and 10am and 5pm on weekends and public holidays. If outside of this then acknowledgement will be on the next day.
- News media queries are responded to as quickly as reasonably practicable and information provided is accurate and credible.
- Only designated spokespeople engage with the news media.
- There is appropriate consultation in the Ministry before a news media response is provided.
- All information released to the news media is signed-off by the person with the relevant authorisation.
- Ministry spokespeople do not express personal views.
- Ministers are kept informed under the 'no surprises' policy.
- An accurate and comprehensive news media log is maintained.
- The Ministry has a strong relationship with news media and is seen as a credible and responsive organisation [subject to a measure being designed.]

Compliance Management

Compliance management process

Compliance management tools and processes will be used to minimise the risk of breaches of this policy. These will include:

- Monitoring of compliance with required processes, procedures or guidelines set out in the mandatory procedures manuals.
- Tools such as checklists or online modules to help inform staff and managers of their obligations.
- A central register to record breaches of this policy, held by the policy owner.
- Daily monitoring of Ministry news media engagement performance (including an environmental scan and news media log) to ensure compliance.

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Next Review: 1 July 2020

Policy Owner: General Manager, ECoMS

News Media policy

- Follow up and analysis of non-compliance with support provided to ensure future compliance.

Compliance reporting and information

Compliance information regarding this policy will be provided to the Compliance Team of Risk and Assurance quarterly.

Training and Communication

To ensure designated spokespeople have the required competencies to engage with the news media, and that the policy is effectively communicated across the Ministry, the Engagement & Communications team will:

- Organise news media training where it is considered there is a need; this includes for new spokespeople or in areas where there is heightened public interest.
- Remind staff of the policy by communicating it through internal channels.
- Promote the policy in interactions with staff across the Ministry.
- Publish the News Media Policy on the policy page of the Intranet.

News Media Policy

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**MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,
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Official Information Act Requests Policy

August 2017

Purpose

MBIE is responsible for its compliance with the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). The purpose of this policy is to:

- recognise the constitutional significance of the legislation and the obligations it places on MBIE as a government agency
- support staff in responding to requests made to MBIE for official information (departmental requests)
- support staff in providing advice to Ministers regarding requests made to Ministers for official information (ministerial requests)
- managing any legal or reputational risk associated with OIA requests
- ensure MBIE meets its obligations under the OIA
- support MBIE's commitment to Open and Transparent Government in order to *Grow New Zealand for All*.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- all staff at MBIE and any contractors, temporary or permanent, employed or engaged by the Ministry both on and off-shore
- any official information held by MBIE
- requests by a person for personal information about another person.
- requests from the media that are handled as media queries.

The Ministry also deals with interactions with the media through various approved channels, including Social Media channels. Generally speaking a media request is seeking a view point from the Ministry or relates to a request for information that is already in the public domain, and as such is not treated as a request under the Official Information Act.

Help

Please contact the [Ministerial Services Team](#) for further assistance or information.

Definition of terms

Official information – Official information defined in the OIA. In general terms, it includes all the information held by the Ministry in a variety of forms, and includes internal rules and policies, emails, meeting notes, and employee recollections.

Official Information Act requests - Requests for information can be made in any format including verbally. The request does not have to mention the OIA, or be worded in a specific way. The State Services Commission notes that a request for official information will be logged when it requires considered application of the OIA.

Departmental OIA requests – These are requests made directly to MBIE for information it holds. A step-by-step guide for departmental OIA requests can be found [here](#).

Ministerial OIA requests – These are requests made to one of our Ministers. In this case a Private Secretary may refer the request to MBIE for advice to the Minister, including a draft response. A step-by-step guide for Ministerial OIA requests can be found [here](#).

Privacy Act requests – Requests by a natural person for personal information about themselves is always considered under the Privacy Act. For more information refer to the Privacy Policy [here](#).

Timeframe for communication of a decision and making information available – A decision needs to be made and communicated to a requester within 20 working days unless there is a reason to extend the time limit. If the associated information is to be provided separately it must be done so without ‘undue delay’.

Extensions – Extending the statutory timeframe in which to communicate a decision on a request or transfer of a request.

Transfers – Requests can be transferred to a Minister or another government agency where the information requested is held by them and is not held by MBIE, or the information is more closely associated with the functions of another agency or Minister.

Charging – Seeking payment from a requester for work done on an OIA in accordance with the Ministry of Justice Guidelines.

Media query – Requests received from the media that can be dealt with quickly and not processed using the formal OIA process. MBIE’s News Media Policy can be found [here](#).

Policy statements

MBIE is committed to the intent and purpose of the OIA. Its key objectives are to:

- progressively increase the availability of official information to the people of New Zealand to:
 - enable more effective public participation in the making and administration of laws and policies; and
 - promote the accountability of Ministers and officials;and so enhance respect for the law and promote good government; and
- protect official information to the extent consistent with the public interest and the preservation of personal privacy.

MBIE contributes to the Open Government Partnership New Zealand and the whole-of-government work led by the State Services Commission to improve agency OIA practices.

MBIE cooperates fully with the work of the Ombudsman in reviewing and investigating any complaints made under the OIA.

MBIE will regularly and progressively publish more of its information proactively, such as OIAs responses, reports, research and data sets to enhance public access to information and to reduce the need for information to be requested under the OIA.

MBIE continuously develops and improves its procedures to respond to requests ensuring compliance with the statutory requirements and also increasing public satisfaction with the OIA service it provides.

MBIE consistently educates management and staff on their obligations and responsibilities under the OIA to lift performance and understanding across the agency, and to give them the support and tools they need.

Main policy rules or guidance

- Extensions must be notified to a requester within 20 working days of the request. More than one extension is permissible so long as all extensions are notified within the original 20 working days. If it is a Ministerial OIA a decision must be made by the Minister on advice from MBIE. This advice should usually be provided within 15 working days of the Minister receiving the request depending on individual Ministers' requirements.
- Transfers of requests must be identified and notified to a requester within 10 working days after a request is received. If it is a Ministerial OIA a decision to transfer must be made by the Minister on advice from MBIE. This advice should be provided within 5 working days of the Minister receiving the request. The time for making a transfer can be extended in accordance with the same reasons for extending the communication of a decision.
- If a request is too broad or complex or the information being requested is unclear, MBIE should contact the requester to seek refinement or clarification. If this contact is made within the first 7 working days after receiving the original request, the timeframe for responding can be reset from the date that the requester confirms their revised/clarified request.
- A requester may ask that a request be treated as urgent, and if so must give the reasons for seeking the information urgently. MBIE should consider any request for urgency, and assess whether it would be reasonable to give the request priority.
- The decision to charge must only be made with the involvement of a senior branch Manager. MBIE can charge for the supply of information under the OIA and may require that all or part of the charge be paid by the requester in advance of the information being made available. Charges cannot be made for the time spent deciding whether or not to release the information.
- Delegations for the sign-out of responses depend on business group or branch preferences. Generally Deputy Chief Executives have delegated OIA sign-out to either Tier 3 or Tier 4 Managers, unless a response entails reputational or other significant risk. Managers are responsible for the content of the response that they sign-out, so it is important that a Manager has reviewed the response, including any decisions made on information being withheld.

- Ministers or their Offices should be informed of all departmental OIAs where it is determined they have an interest in MBIE's intended response. When consulting Ministers, a briefing and intended response is normally provided 5 full working days before any official information is released.
- Under the "*no surprises*" convention, MBIE must advise the relevant Minister about any request for official information that is "*particularly sensitive or potentially controversial*". This would cover all requests made by opposition MPs, opposition political parties, journalists, bloggers and special interest groups. The decision on the request is made by MBIE in accordance with the OIA.
- The Minister for Economic Development, as the Minister Responsible for MBIE, is to be notified of all departmental ownership OIAs received by MBIE.
- Departmental ownership OIAs relate to cross Ministry information, for example, departmental expenditure, staffing, personnel issues, consultants, contractors, contracts, international travel, domestic travel, industrial relations, and gifts.
- All responses to OIA requests from the media must be signed-out by an authorised or delegated communications advisor before the response is sent. Communications advisors must also be consulted on high risk requests from oppositions MPs, opposition parties, and lobby groups or on high profile issues.
- All OIA requests must be logged and allocated promptly by the Ministerial Services Workflow team in accordance with performance expectations, and the team completing the response must arrange a scoping meeting within 3 working days of receipt. A scoping meeting early in the process is vital to ensure all participants are clear about the scope and interpretation of the request.
- Staff do not have an absolute expectation of privacy in relation to work product information and staff personal information. MBIE will take all reasonable steps to protect the privacy and security of its staff members when responding to requests for information.
- All staff names should be considered for release unless there are relevant withholding grounds including a likelihood of harm such as harassment or threatening behaviour against staff or other safety concerns. Final decisions should continue be made on a case-by-case basis and, if in doubt, Legal Services or Ministerial Services consulted.

Mandatory procedures

Standard Operating procedures

Step-by-step daily guide: Departmental OIA request (no Ministerial consultation)
Step-by-step daily guide: Departmental OIA request (Ministerial consultation)
Step-by-step daily guide: Ministerial OIA request
MBIE OIA Procedures - Departmental and Ministerial OIA Request
Scoping OIA meeting checklist document

MBIE Templates

Acknowledgement of OIA request
To narrow or clarify the scope of the request: 18(e)
To narrow or clarify the scope of the request: 18(f)
Advise time extension under the OIA
Letter to accompany release under the OIA: No information withheld
Letter to accompany release under the OIA: Some/most information withheld
Letter to advise decision to refuse: Section 9 substantive reasons
Letter to advise decision to refuse: Section 18 administrative reasons
Transferring a request: Letter to transfer
Transferring a request: Letter to transferee
Letter to advise reason for refusal: Section 23 request
Letter to communicate a decision with the information provided at a later date

Related MBIE policies and documents

Related internal policies and documents:

- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [News Media Policy](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Records Management Policy](#)

Relevant legislation and regulations

Relevant legislation and regulations include:

- [Official Information Act 1982](#)
- [Ombudsmen Act 1975](#)
- [Privacy Act 1993](#)
- [Public Records Act 2005](#)

External Guidance

Broader guidance material on the provision of official information is available through the following links:

- [Ombudsman Guides](#) - Comprehensive guides to the OIA legislation and use of withholding provisions
- [Cabinet Office Manual](#) - Detailed guidance for Ministers on the operation of the OIA and the release of official information including Cabinet Papers

- State Services Commission - [Release of Official Information: Guidelines for Co-ordination, request for draft reports, correspondence and advice.](#)
- [Public Sector Intranet OIA Guidance](#)
- Privacy Commissioner - [Guidance on the relationship between the OIA and the Privacy Act 1993 with respect to personal information held by government agencies.](#)

Measures of Success

The Ministry has the following measure of success in place.

- Ministerial servicing standards for portfolios agreed with Ministers require 95% or more of advice on Ministerial OIAs to be provided within specified timeframes.
- The OIA requires 100% of decisions to be completed and communicated within statutory timeframes.
- The number of OIA complaints to the Ombudsman regarding MBIE is no more than 5% of total requests responded to in any financial year.
- The number of OIA final views formed by the Ombudsman against MBIE will be 5 or fewer in any financial year.

Consultation processes in developing or reviewing this Policy

In reviewing and updating this policy, Ministerial Services consulted with:

- Enterprise Risk and Assurance
- Legal Services
- Engagement and Communications and Business Groups.

Compliance Management

Compliance management process

Staff are required to use and comply with the compliance tools located in the mandatory procedures.

Tools such as those listed below will help ensure compliance with this policy

- Completing the coversheet/checklist process or briefing for each OIA:
 - Sign out and quality assurance requirements – peer review, subject matter experts, Tier 3 or 4 managers or General Manager review
 - Consultation with subject matters experts, and where necessary Communications, Legal Services or Ministerial Services
 - Risks and mitigation analysis as required
- Saving a complete record of the OIA into MBIE's record management system including evidence that the OIA was acknowledged, any other correspondence (i.e. relating to extensions), consultation, the decision/s made and the response sent to the requestor
- Compliance with service standards and expectations set out in the Business Partnering Agreements between Ministerial Services and Business Groups
- Monitoring the Ministry's progress against its success measures.

Compliance reporting and information

Ministerial Services information regarding the performance of this policy will be provided to the Enterprise Risk and Assurance Branch every quarter including The Hive's report which tracks the Ministry's performance against its success measures.

The Ministry's OIA performance and complaints statistics are also made publicly available on the:

- State Services Commission (SSC) website which publishes all OIA request statistics and timeliness performance across all State sector organisations.
- Ombudsman website which publishes the number and outcomes of OIA complaints against Ministers and State sector organisations.

Training and Communication

In conjunction with the Legal Services Branch, Ministerial Services provides an *Official Information Act and Privacy* course, available to all Ministry staff monthly through Learn@MBIE.

Ministerial Services has established an *OIA Community of Practice* monthly sessions for MBIE's OIA practitioners and advisors to ensure they have up to date information on the latest Ombudsman guidance and have a forum where common issues and best practice can be debated.

Role-specific training to support staff in self-servicing teams should be provided by business units.

The MBIE OIA Policy, mandatory procedures and processes, and guidance information is available through the intranet.

Key Accountabilities and Responsibilities

Role	Description of responsibility
Chief Executive	Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approval of this policy and procedures• The Ministry meeting its obligations under this policy
Senior Leadership Team	Responsible for reviewing and endorsing this policy and associated procedures or recommending changes to the policy.
Deputy Chief Executives	Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Embedding this policy in their groups• Ensuring their business groups are complying with this policy, procedures, guidance and templates as applicable• Ensuring their business groups are complying with the <i>no surprises</i> convention• Ensuring appropriate managers have been delegated responsibility for signing out OIA responses in their areas.
Policy owner (General Manager)	Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensuring the policy is working effectively through regular

- Engagement, Communications and Ministerial Services)	<p>monitoring and reporting of compliance to the policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive release of information • Maintenance and updating of this policy • Promoting staff awareness.
Tier 3 or 4 Managers who have been delegated OIA sign out	<p>Responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The content and signing out of the OIA response or advice. A manager must review the response, including any decisions made on information • Escalating or informing the DCE about any aspects of a request that might create risk. • Approving consultation with Ministers on departmental OIA.
All staff	<p>Responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising Ministerial Services at OIA@mbie.govt.nz on the same day they receive an OIA request which is required to go through the formal process • Checking with Ministerial Services that a request should be logged as an OIA if unsure • Treating the OIA response process as a priority • Following correct records management process
Ministerial Services, Communications Advisors, Legal Services	<p>Responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with the relevant business group to determine which approach is the most appropriate to take in responding to an OIA request received where staff are unsure about the correct process to follow
Writer or analyst	<p>Responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafting the OIA response • Arranging a scoping meeting within 3 working days of receipt • Coordinating input from the relevant business group or groups • Managing the quality assurance and sign out process • Advising manager and communications on need to consult Minister of departmental OIA. • Consulting requester on scope of request.



Media guidelines

As an MBIE staff member, please ensure that you have read and understood the [News Media Policy](#).

What should I do if a journalist calls me?

Inform the journalist to direct their inquiry through the MBIE Communications team on 027 442 2141 or email media@mbie.govt.nz.

Incoming media queries must be managed in consultation with the [Engagement and Communications team](#) so that they can help identify potential risks and opportunities, keep all appropriate staff informed, escalate the enquiry as appropriate, track and log issues, and ensure media coverage is monitored.

Even if you are the appropriate person to respond to the issue related to the media enquiry, and you are authorised to do so, it is important to connect with the Engagement and Communications team to ensure the response is considered, informed and the relevant other parts of MBIE are looped in and Ministers' offices informed where necessary.

Once you've received the query and informed Engagement and Communications, they will discuss with you and your manager to determine how best to respond.

Responses to news media inquiries should be given priority and should be as prompt as reasonably practicable, taking into consideration complexity, reputational risk, confidentiality concerns and the operating environment of 'no surprises' with Ministers. Also think of each media enquiry as an opportunity to tell our story.

Who are the designated media spokespeople?

Only designated Ministry spokespeople are authorised to speak to the news media. Spokespeople will be identified by the relevant DCE or general manager (or delegate) in consultation with the Engagement and Communications team – either on an on-going or one-off basis, depending on the issue.

Ministry spokespeople will be those who:

- have an in-depth knowledge of the issue and are capable of explaining the finer points of the subject
- are able to deal with any fringe issues that could arise during questioning
- can present both the subject and the organisation well
- have suitable capability to communicate professionally to media – this is likely to have involved news media training.



When should I talk to a journalist ‘off the record’?

Never. You should expect any comments you make to journalists to be used and directly attributed to you. Off the record or unattributed comment (for example: “a Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment source”) is not acceptable.

When should I contact the Engagement and Communications team?

Always and as soon as possible. The [Engagement and Communications team](#) is available after hours as well as during business hours and staff must always seek guidance if approached by news media.

The Engagement and Communications team manages and coordinates all aspects of the Ministry’s communications, including helping to build and maintain effective relationships with the news media. The team is a resource staff can draw on to help develop communications plans, prepare and issue media releases, liaise with Ministers’ press secretaries, manage publication and design processes, assist with preparing for interviews or presentations, organise media briefings and other proactive interactions with the media, respond to media enquiries and arrange media training.

Contact a communications advisor ([read about the team on the Intranet](#)) or if you’re not sure who to speak to, contact 027 442 2141 or email media@mbie.govt.nz.

What do I need to provide for a media response or a media release?

Communications team may ask for your help in preparing a media response or release. They will seek information about:

- What the issue is?
- Why people are interested in it?
- Is the timing significant?
- Who is involved?
- Where and when it is happening?
- Is there anything potentially controversial or politically sensitive?
- Is there a positive story to tell?
- What does the Ministry want to say about this issue?

Sign-off on media responses

Any information released to the media must be approved through the sign-off process outlined in the [News Media Policy](#). This task will be managed by the the Engagement and Communications team.

The Engagement and Communications team will work closely with managers to ensure a ‘no surprises’ approach for managers and ministers.



Do I need to alert the Minister's office to a media enquiry?

No. The Communications and Engagement team will be the point of contact between the Ministry and the Minister's press secretary. They will advise the Minister's private secretary at the same time as they advise the press secretary.

How can I proactively deal with the media?

If you have an idea for a proactive media opportunity, contact the Engagement and Communications team early. They can help you to develop a communications plan and/or provide input into your project planning. The team should already be engaging with your branch/group looking for positive, proactive opportunities.

Communications plans will differ depending on the issue that needs to be communicated. Key elements usually include:

- background, context and environment
- objectives – what you want to achieve?
- key messages – what you want to say?
- target audiences – who do you want/need to reach?
- tools/channels – what are the best tools/channels to reach them?
- timeframes
- milestones
- budget.

Even if proactively contacting the media is part of an agreed campaign or communications plan, you must continue to involve the Engagement and Communications team.

What media training is available?

The Engagement and Communications team can help you to prepare for an upcoming interview by rehearsing you through the likely questions you may be asked and interview tactics/techniques. They can help you work out how to get your key points across and to manage any potentially difficult areas. The team can also organise more generic media training to equip you with the skills to handle a variety of interview situations such as broadcast media.

How should I respond to inaccurate or unfair reporting?

Contact the Engagement and Communications team to discuss any inaccurate or unfair reporting. We should always look to correct inaccurate information – if we don't, it can get repeated by other media and be taken as fact. The Engagement and Communications team also monitors coverage and will alert you to issues of accuracy and work with your branch/group on how to respond.



What about releasing information about companies listed on stock exchanges or securities markets?

Releasing information about publicly-listed companies, whether to the media or other parties, can have serious risks around insider trading, impacts on share prices etc. Be particularly cautious about information relating to publicly-listed companies, and always talk to your manager, and Communications and/or Legal teams about what you need to consider. A paper on Communications and Market Sensitivity is available from the Engagement and Communications team if you require it. Also see the relevant [Cabinet Office Circular](#).

Using personal information

Generally, the Ministry can only use personal information for the purpose for which it was obtained. The Ministry can't disclose personal information unless:

- the disclosure is one of the purposes or relates to one of the purposes for which the information was obtained
- the source of the information is a publicly available publication (e.g. book, magazine, newspaper)
- we have permission from the individual concerned.

If in any doubt, discuss with the [Legal Team](#).

Official Information Act

All enquiries to MBIE, whether from the media or the public, are covered by the Official Information Act 1982.

In the interests of good media relations, most media enquiries will be responded to as quickly and fully as possible without citing or relying on the Act.

However, when a journalist seeks complex or a lot of information that could take some time to gather, you can say that the request can't be met immediately and will be handled under the Act.

In such cases, the journalist may change their request to something more easily accessed that can be provided promptly.

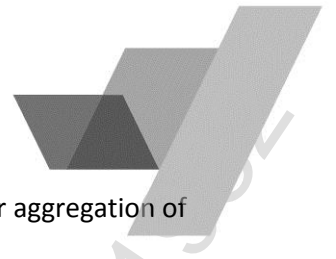
More information on the OIA can be found on the [NZ Legislation website](#).

Social media

The [News Media Policy](#) and this document cover responses to enquiries through social media channels insofar as organisation/individual making the enquiry meets the definition of news media viz:

News media should be interpreted as any individual or organisation that meet the following criteria;

Updated 16 August 2017 by John Tulloch, Engagement and Communications Manager



- A significant element of their publishing activities involves the generation and/or aggregation of news, information and opinion of current value.
- They disseminate this information to a public audience. Dissemination can be by print, electronic or digital means.

The policy does not cover MBIE staff use of social media as a work tool. That is covered by the [Social Media Policy](#) and [Social Media Guidelines](#) documents.

After-hours media queries

There will be times when journalists call after-hours wanting a response to a query or an interview with a spokesperson. Only the generic Engagement and Communications contact details (News Media phone: 027 442 2141 ; Email: media@mbie.govt.nz) is provided to the news media. Your personal contact details are not provided. As with business hours, the Engagement and Communications team are to manage all news media contact.

Released under the Official Information Act 1982