



# Te Kawa Mataaho

Public Service Commission

1 March 2024

9(2)(a) privacy

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## Official Information Request

**Our Ref: OIA 2023-0333**

I refer to your official information request received on 25 January 2024 where you have asked:

*“Copies of all internal correspondence including but not limited to emails, letters, emails, text messages, Whatsapp, Signal, Microsoft Teams sent or received by any Public Service Commission staff or representatives regarding a request of savings from the Minister of Finance for the 2024/25 financial year, since 20 November 2023.*

*Copies of all external correspondence including but not limited to emails, letters, emails, text messages, Whatsapp, Signal, Microsoft Teams sent or received between Public Service Commission staff or representatives and the Minister of Finance or her office requesting savings for the 2024/25 financial year, since 20 November 2023.*

*Copies of all correspondence including but not limited to emails, letters, emails, text messages, Whatsapp, Signal, Microsoft Teams sent or received by any Public Service Commission staff or representatives regarding a request of savings from the Minister of Finance for the 2024/25 financial year, since 20 November 2023.*

*Copies of all advice, briefings, memos or any other documents provided Public Service Commission staff or representatives regarding a request of savings from the Minister of Finance for the 2024/25 financial year, since 20 November 2023.*

*Any further reports the Minister or her Office have received from Public Service Commission staff or representatives regarding a request of savings from the Minister of Finance for the 2024/25 financial year, since 20 November 2023.”*

## Our Response

On 20 December 2023, the Minister of Finance, Hon Nicola Willis announced the Government had started on an ongoing Fiscal Sustainability Programme to embed a culture of responsible spending across Government.

Ministers have asked their agencies to find savings ahead of Budget 2024, with individual agency targets informed by headcount growth since 2017. All savings proposals will be subject to an assurance process and final agreement by Cabinet at Budget 2024.

## Correspondence sent or received by Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission

Listed in the table below are two letters Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission (the Commission) has received from the Associate Minister of Finance regarding Budget 2024.

Item	Date	Document Description	Decision
1	21 December 2023	Letter from Hon Chris Bishop, Associate Minister of Finance to Hon Nicola Willis, Minister for the Public Service; copied to the Public Service Commissioner titled Fiscal Objectives across the Term and Budget 2024 Expectations	Withheld in full
2	26 January 2024	Letter from Hon Chris Bishop, Associate Minister of Finance to Hon Nicola Willis, Minister for the Public Service; copied to the Public Service Commissioner titled Capital Process for Budget 2024	Withheld in full

We are withholding the documents listed in the table above under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials.

Please find enclosed and listed in the below table correspondence sent within and to the Commission that relates to a request for savings from the Minister of Finance for the 2024/25 financial year.

Item	Date	Document Description	Decision
3	26 January 2024	Email from Treasury titled Baseline savings reductions – media response	Released in full
4	26 January 2024	Email from the Deputy Public Service Commissioner to all Commission staff titled Quick update on the Governments saving programme	Released in full
5	1 February 2024	Email from the Deputy Commissioner to all Commission staff titled Fiscal Sustainability Programme	Released in full
6	5 February 2024	Email from the Deputy Public Service Commissioner to all Commission staff seeking expressions of interest for a Programme Lead	Released in full

We have identified other internal and external correspondence with Treasury and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet as well as documents in relation to the Fiscal Sustainability Programme that we have deemed within scope of your request. We have decided to withhold that information under the following sections of the OIA:

- section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the OIA to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials
- section 9(2)(g)(i) of the OIA to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any public service agency.

There are also a number of documents that we have classified as “administrative” in nature and have not included them in the documents considered for release. The types of documents that we have deemed as administrative are as follows:

- emails and messages sent for the purpose of arranging internal meetings at the Commission
- emails and messages sent providing links to documents
- emails forwarding links to media articles

- emails and messages sent confirming receipt of a document

**Advice, briefings, memos sent or received by Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission**

Listed in the table below are three reports the Commission has provided to the Minister for the Public Service that fall within scope of your request.

We have decided to withhold these documents in full under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the OIA in order to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials.

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the OIA.

Item	Date	Document Description	Decision
7	14 December 2023	2023-0316 – REPORT – Title withheld under section 9(2)(f)(iv)	Withheld in full
8	20 December 2023	2023-0321 – REPORT – Title withheld under section 9(2)(f)(iv)	Withheld in full
9	14 December 2023	2023-0315 – JOINT REPORT – Title withheld under section 9(2)(f)(iv)	Withheld in full

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the OIA.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact [Ministerial.Services@publicservice.govt.nz](mailto:Ministerial.Services@publicservice.govt.nz).

You 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that we intend to publish this letter (with your personal details removed) and enclosed documents on the Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission’s website.

Yours sincerely

Nicky Dirks  
**Manager – Ministerial and Executive Services**  
**Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission**

**From:** [Alex Masters \[TSY\]](#)  
**Subject:** [UNCLASSIFIED] Baseline savings reductions - media response  
**Date:** Friday, 26 January 2024 5:08:13 pm  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[Baseline reduction targets by agency.docx](#)

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**This email was sent from someone outside of Te Kawa Mataaho. Please take extra care.**

[UNCLASSIFIED]

Kia ora koutou

Thank you for your patience. For your awareness, the Finance Minister agreed to release the percentage savings figures for each agency. This has now gone to Stuff (please see attached document).

Also for your information Secretary of the Treasury Caralee McLiesh emailed Chief Executives the below email.

Again, thank you for your patience, please don't hesitate to get in contact if you questions, and forward any enquiries regarding savings or the budget to me or [media@treasury.govt.nz](mailto:media@treasury.govt.nz)

And sorry to everyone I missed the phonecalls/emails of today!

Alex



**Alex Masters | Head of Communications & Engagement | Te Tai Ōhanga – The Treasury**

Ph: 9(2)(a) privacy | Email/IM: 9(2)(a) privacy

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**From:** Caralee McLiesh [TSY]  
**Sent:** Friday, 26 January 2024 4:37 pm  
**To:**  
**Subject:** Baseline savings reductions - media response

Kia ora koutou

This is an urgent heads-up to let you know that on the back of a number of media enquiries regarding the savings target percentages, the Minister of Finance has decided to waive Budget-Sensitivity rules and release a table of agencies' target of 6.5% or 7.5%. The response will note that the eligible base for the targets includes non departmental and departmental spend and excludes certain items such as non discretionary spend, and that final decisions will be made in the budget process.

As you are aware, the Finance Minister announced at the mini-Budget last year that government

agencies would be subject to a 6.5 or 7.5% savings target as part of the budget process. She spoke to a range of media yesterday confirming that was being sought from all agencies, but did not go into detail on which agencies had which target.

This information will be released to Stuff by the Treasury later this afternoon.

I am aware that while some of you have already provided savings information to staff or others, for some this may be the first they learn of this target so want to ensure you have the opportunity to communicate to your staff if you wish. You may find the below lines useful.

As the Minister of Finance announced at the mini-Budget in December last year, the Government is looking to find \$1.5 billion per annum in savings to deliver on policy commitments and fund cost pressures. Ministers have asked their agencies to identify savings options of either 6.5% or 7.5%, depending on how much their full-time staff numbers increased since 2017. Our agency percentage target is X %

We are working to identify credible savings options, and ministers will consider these alongside our rationale, risks and trade offs required to reach our target. Final decisions will be made as part of the Budget 2024 process.

Please note that the dollar sum of this percentage **will not be released** and remains Budget-Sensitive. Any details about what savings options your agency and minister are considering also remains Budget-Sensitive, and no decisions have yet been taken. If you receive media enquiries regarding the savings target or options, or the Budget process in general please feel free to direct them to our Communications team: [media@treasury.govt.nz](mailto:media@treasury.govt.nz)

Please let me know if you have any questions or would like to discuss.

Ngā mihi nui  
Caralee

**Caralee McLiesh** ([she/her](#))

**Te Tumu Whakarae mō Te Tai Ōhanga | Secretary and Chief Executive - The Treasury**

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## Agency savings targets

Agencies have been asked to identify savings options of either 6.5 or 7.5 percent. If their full-time equivalent staff numbers (FTE)<sup>1</sup> increased by more than 50% since 2017, they were allocated the higher target.

Agencies have been asked to develop credible savings options, while ensuring New Zealanders continue to receive quality public services. Agencies have been asked to look at low value programmes, non-essential functions, and contractor and consultant spend in the first instance. Ministers and Cabinet will make final decisions on whether to accept those proposals as part of the Budget 2024 process, and agencies will have the ability to set out any risks and trade-offs associated with their proposals.

The percentage savings target was applied to an eligible spend base which includes departmental and non-departmental funding. Several adjustments were made to:

- exclude spend which is either non-discretionary or not likely to be suitable for savings (such as welfare spend), and
- reduce the target for agencies delivering education and health services reflecting the Government's priority on frontline services.

Please refer to the table below for savings target information.

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Percentage of eligible base- 7.5% or 6.5%</b>
Department of Conservation	6.5%
Department of Internal Affairs	6.5%
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	6.5%
Education Review Office	6.5%
Executive Board for the Elimination of Family Violence and Sexual Violence	6.5%
Inland Revenue Department	6.5%
Justice Cluster (Crown Law Office, Department of Corrections, Ministry of Justice, New Zealand Police, Serious Fraud Office) <sup>2</sup>	6.5%
Land Information New Zealand	6.5%
Ministry for Culture and Heritage	7.5%
Ministry for Pacific Peoples	7.5%

<sup>1</sup> Based on Public Service Commission workforce data

<sup>2</sup> Given the interconnected nature of the Justice sector, a single savings target has been set for Justice Cluster agencies based on their combined eligible spend base

Ministry for Primary Industries	7.5%
Ministry for the Environment	7.5%
Ministry for Women	7.5%
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment	7.5%
Ministry of Defence	7.5%
Ministry of Education	7.5%
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade	6.5%
Ministry of Health	6.5%
Ministry of Housing and Urban Development	7.5%
Ministry of Māori Development - Te Puni Kōkiri	6.5%
Ministry of Social Development	6.5%
Ministry of Transport	7.5%
New Zealand Customs Service	6.5%
New Zealand Defence Force	6.5%
Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives	6.5%
Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children	6.5%
Parliamentary Counsel Office	6.5%
Parliamentary Service	6.5%
Public Service Commission	7.5%
Statistics New Zealand	7.5%
Te Arawhiti – Office for Māori Crown Relations	6.5%
The Treasury	6.5%
Whaikaha - Ministry for Disabled people	7.5%

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Percentage of eligible base- 7.5% or 6.5%</b>
Te Arawhiti – Office for Māori Crown Relations	6.5%
Department of Conservation	6.5%
Department of Internal Affairs	6.5%



**From:** [Heather Baggott](#)  
**To:** [@All Staff](#)  
**Subject:** Quick update on the Government's saving programme  
**Date:** Friday, 26 January 2024 5:03:01 pm  
**Attachments:** [image006.gif](#)  
[image007.png](#)  
[image008.png](#)  
[image009.png](#)  
[image010.jpg](#)

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Kia ora e te whānau,

As you know, the Minister of Finance announced at the mini-Budget in December last year that the Government is looking to find \$1.5 billion per annum in savings to deliver on policy commitments and fund cost pressures.

This afternoon, the Treasury released the savings targets which the Government expects from each agency, including us at 7.5%.

All agencies have been asked to identify savings and we need to play our part. We are looking right across our work programme and how we operate. This includes things like how we can reduce our spending on non-personnel costs, such as our property, technology and use of contractors and consultants – it's not simply about the number of people we employ.

This also isn't new - our work towards meeting the previous government's saving targets of 1-2% (which is included in the new target) was already underway. Our task over the coming weeks is to identify options for our Minister to inform decisions through the Budget process.

We'll provide a full update at Staff Talk next week to let you know what we've done to date, what else we need to do, and how you can be involved going forward.

Ngā mihi  
Heather

**Heather Baggott** (she/her)

**Te Pou Turuki mō Te Kawa Mataaho | Deputy Public Service Commissioner**

waea 9(2)(a) privacy

īmēra: 9(2)(a) privacy



**Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission**

[www.publicservice.govt.nz](http://www.publicservice.govt.nz) | [www.govt.nz](http://www.govt.nz)



**From:** [Duane McKibben](#)  
**To:** [@All Staff](#)  
**Subject:** Fiscal Sustainability Programme  
**Date:** Thursday, 1 February 2024 8:17:23 am  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)

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## Fiscal Sustainability Programme

Kia ora e te whānau o Te Kawa Mataaho

Thank you to everyone who attended Staff Talk yesterday to hear about the Government's fiscal sustainability expectations, as we begin to explore the implications for the Commission. It was great to see so many people there.

This isn't the end of the discussion but more the beginning, as we work together as a Commission to do our bit for New Zealand, meet government expectations, and demonstrate our leadership of the Public Service.

We are committed to working with all of you on this, being people-centred, and as open and transparent with you as we can.

Here's a [link](#) to the presentation given at Staff Talk yesterday. We hope this can be a helpful starter for conversations within your teams and groups over the coming weeks.

### Feedback:

Deputy Commissioners will be responsible for feeding back themes and ideas for consideration by Te Mana Arataki. You can also submit feedback via your PSA delegates as well as emailing [efficiencyideas@publicservice.govt.nz](mailto:efficiencyideas@publicservice.govt.nz).

### Questions:

There wasn't a lot of time to discuss questions at yesterday's meeting, given the amount of content covered. There's a lot of information to absorb and reflect on. If you have any questions or concerns, you can access support via a range of channels, including your manager or PSA delegate. We also acknowledge that change and uncertainty can be unsettling. If you feel you would benefit from extra confidential support, you can also access Vitae, our employee assistance programme provider.

Thank you for your continued commitment to delivering and making a positive difference, as we navigate this together.

Ngā manaakitanga

**Duane McKibben** ([he/him](#))

**Kaikōmihana Tuarua | Deputy Commissioner**

Whakatutukitanga ā-Whakahaere | Organisational Capability and Performance

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Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission

2 The Terrace

Wellington 6011

**From:** [Gaye Searancke](#)  
**To:** @All Staff  
**Subject:** Supporting the Government's fiscal sustainability priority  
**Date:** Monday, 5 February 2024 2:10:20 pm  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[Programme Lead EOI.docx](#)  
[Te Kawa Mataaho Expression of Interest Form.docx](#)

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Kia ora e te whānau

At [staff talk](#) last week we talked about the Government's priority for fiscal sustainability across the Public Service, and what it means for the Commission. We outlined the approach we are taking, including our desire for you to contribute as teams and as individuals to help identify options and to inform our decisions and advice to our Minister.

We are still very much at the early stages of this work. While we have been taking opportunities to shift our resources to support the Government's immediate priorities (as we would usually do), we haven't taken any decisions yet on savings initiatives.

To ensure we are well organised and supported in our approach, Te Mana Arataki have agreed to establish a dedicated programme team. This team will pick up and build on the work of the previous strategic finance review.

The Commissioner (our acting Commissioner, until a substantive appointment is made) will be the final decision-maker. I will sponsor the programme and work closely with the programme team, and Te Mana Arataki will provide governance.

Today I am seeking expressions of interest for a Programme Lead. We are keen for this role to be taken up by someone from within the Commission. They will lead a small cross-Commission team which will act as the engine behind our programme, helping to inform and advise decision-makers. This includes reflecting back and taking on board your feedback, and ensuring we take a structured approach to identify, develop, and implement options.

We appreciate the time you have already taken to share your views and ideas. We are keen to keep hearing from you, and look forward to hearing back the results of your discussions with your leaders over the coming weeks. Deputy Commissioners, working with our people leaders, will continue to feed back themes and ideas for consideration. We are also committed to keeping you updated on the programme of work as it develops.

For those interested in the Programme Lead role, please see the attached information which includes details on how to express your interest.

Ngā manaakitanga  
Gaye

**Gaye Searancke** (she/her)  
**Te Pou Turuki mō Te Kawa Mataaho | Deputy Public Service Commissioner**  
**Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission**  
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# EXPRESSION OF INTEREST



**Te Kawa Mataaho**  
Public Service Commission

<b>Job title / opportunity</b> What is the job or opportunity you are applying for?		
<b>Your name and contact details</b> Please include your email address and mobile number		
<b>Why are you interested in this job/opportunity?</b> Tell us about your motivation and the fit with your career and development objectives		
<b>What skills and experience make you suitable for this job/opportunity?</b> Provide a targeted summary relevant to this opportunity		
<b>Referees</b> Please include two referees and their contact details	<b>Referee 1:</b>	<b>Referee 2:</b>
<b>Attachments</b> Please include a copy of your CV and/or refer us to another career summary, e.g. on Talent Exchange or Linked In	<input type="checkbox"/> Attached CV? <input type="checkbox"/> Talent Exchange profile? (please ensure it is up to date) <input type="checkbox"/> Linked In profile? (please insert hyperlink)	

# Opportunities & Updates

## Expressions of interest – Programme Lead

Following last week's [staff talk](#) on supporting the Government's fiscal sustainability programme, Te Mana Arataki have agreed to establish a dedicated programme team. This team will pick up and build on the work of the previous strategic finance review.

We are now seeking expressions of interest for a Programme Lead. This person will lead a small cross-Commission team which will act as the engine behind our programme, helping to inform and advise decision-makers. This includes reflecting back and taking on board employee feedback, and ensuring we take a structured approach to identify, develop, and implement options.

You will:

- Lead a multi-functional programme team to drive organisational efficiencies that deliver on fiscal sustainability expectations,
- Identify issues, provide analysis and options to inform decision-makers,
- Drive momentum and sequencing to enable effective governance and implementation,
- Track work across all work streams, manage information and provide quality reporting to Te Mana Arataki on progress and risks,
- Inform choices on organisational design, operating model and functional/resource allocations, and
- Support and advise on change, communications and engagement with our leaders, our people, the PSA, and other relevant stakeholders.

We are looking to select a person with high levels of drive, determination, pace, agility, resilience, and discretion. You will be confident working with senior leaders to lead organisational efficiency and change.

If you have any questions about this opportunity, please contact Gaye Searancke.

If you would like to express your interest, please complete the EOI form succinctly outlining why you are interested in this opportunity and what you would bring to the role. Please also provide a copy of your CV. The EOI should be submitted to [9\(2\)\(a\) privacy](#) by no later than 9am **Monday 12 February 2024**.