


OC240167

22 March 2024



Tēnā koe 

I refer to your email dated 23 February 2024, requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

1. *"The information produced by the Ministry of Transport underpinning the claim made the prime minister and transport minister that the previous government had a \$200b funding gap in its transport programme."*
2. *Of the projects identified in the table the transport minister provided to the Herald, please identify the ones where the former government had made a commit to fund them, as opposed to investigating the projects through the business case process.*
3. *Is it correct to assert, as the prime minister and transport minister did, that the former government had a \$200b hole in its transport plans?*
4. *What advice did the ministry provide to ministers to this effect?*
5. *Did the ministry provide any advice cautioning ministers not to present the figure as a 'gap'? If so, please provide it?*
6. *How does the \$200b figure square with what the ministry said in its BIM - that the total land transport programme for 2024-34, including unfunded commitments, was \$125b."*

Response to the request for *"the information produced by the Ministry of Transport underpinning the claim made the prime minister and transport minister that the previous government had a \$200b funding gap in its transport programme"*

Three documents fall within the scope of your request. The documents are listed in the document schedule attached as Annex 1.

For documents 1 and 2 I am refusing your request under the following section of the Act:

18(d) the information requested is or will soon be publicly available

These will be uploaded to the Ministry website once released.

For the third document *'Transport investment programme'*, this document contains commercially sensitive information and is withheld in its entirety under the following section of the Act:

9(2)(i) enable a Minister of the Crown or any public service agency or organisation holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities

The Transport Investment Programme spreadsheet was not provided to the Minister of Transport but the outputs of this spreadsheet were used to inform the briefings provided to the Minister of Transport.

With regard to the information that has been withheld under section 9 of the Act, I am satisfied that the reasons for withholding the information at this time are not outweighed by public interest considerations that would make it desirable to make the information available.

Response to the request for “Of the projects identified in the table the transport minister provided to the Herald, please identify the ones where the former government had made a commit to fund them, as opposed to investigating the projects through the business case process.”

The table provided to the Herald included a number of programmes that have projects in various stages of delivery. For example parts of these programmes will still be in the business casing phase whilst other parts will be in delivery. The table below outlines the stage that each of the programmes are at.

Project/Programme	Stage
Auckland Light Rail	Business case / property acquisition
Auckland Transport Alignment Project (ATAP)	Large programme of work, projects are at various stages from planning to delivery
Waitematā Harbour Connections	Business case
Let's Get Wellington Moving	Large programme of work, projects are at various stages from planning to delivery
Christchurch Mass Transit	Business case
Rail Network Investment Programme	Large programme of work, projects are at various stages from planning to delivery
Rail Metro Programmes	Large programme of work, projects are at various stages from planning to delivery
Transport Choices	Large programme of work, projects are at various stages from planning to delivery
Cyclone recovery & rebuild package	Large programme of work, projects are at various stages from planning to delivery
Strategic Investment Programme	Business case
NZ Upgrade Programme	Large programme of work, projects are at various stages from planning to delivery

Response to the request for “Is it correct to assert, as the prime minister and transport minister did, that the former government had a \$200b hole in its transport plans?”, The request for “What advice did the ministry provide to ministers to this effect?”, and the request for “Did the ministry provide any advice cautioning ministers not to present the figure as a 'gap'? If so, please provide it?”

We can confirm that the numbers are from a Ministry briefing. Briefings provided to the Minister of Transport by the Ministry represent the Ministry’s advice and position related to transport commitments made at the point of time when the advice was released. Documents 1 and 2 fall within this part of your request which have been refused under 18(d).

Response to request for “How does the \$200b figure square with what the ministry said in its BIM - that the total land transport programme for 2024-34, including unfunded commitments, was \$125b”

Both the \$200 billion figure provided to the Herald and the \$125 billion figure provided to the Minister in the Briefing to the incoming Minister are correct. The \$125 billion represents the expenditure over the 10 years, the \$200 billion referenced in the BIM included forecast capital expenditure post 2034. You can find the proactive release of the Strategic BIM for Transport here (<https://www.transport.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/MOT-Strategic-Briefing-to-the-Incoming-Minister.pdf>)

You have the right to seek an investigation and review of this response by the Ombudsman, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on the Ombudsman's website www.ombudsman.parliament.nz

The Ministry publishes our Official Information Act responses and the information contained in our reply to you may be published on the Ministry website. Before publishing we will remove any personal or identifiable information.

Nāku noa, nā



Tim Herbert
Manager, Investment

Annex 1 - Document Schedule

Doc#	Document	Decision on release
1	OC230611 Advising on the cost pressures in the land transport system	Refused in full under Section 18(d).
2	OC230611 T2 BIM A3 – Managing cost pressures in the land transport system	Refused in full under Section 18(d).
3	Transport Investment programme (Excel spreadsheet)	Withheld in full under Section 9(2)(i)