


OC250598

9 July 2025



Tēnā koe 

I refer to your email dated 2 July 2025, requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

“all communications with staff regarding a potential triple-merger between the Ministry of Transport, Ministry for the Environment, and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.

In addition, please provide any internal meeting notes, briefings, business cases, and communication with Public Service Minister Judith Collins from the Ministry, on this topic.

In addition, please provide communications between the Chief Executive of the Ministry of Transport and the CEOs of the two other mentioned Ministries on this topic, if it exists”

Four documents are in scope of the first part of your request which are released with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act to protect the privacy of natural persons. Some information has been marked out of scope of this request. The document schedule attached as Annex 1 outlines how these documents have been treated under the Act.

The Ministry has not had any meetings with Minister Collins. The Chief Executive of the Ministry has not had any communications with the Chief Executives of the Ministry for the Environment and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development on this topic. Therefore, the remaining parts of the request are refused under section 18(e) of the Act that the documents alleged to contain the information requested do not exist.

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.

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's website. Before publishing we will remove any personal or identifiable information.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'HARZ' followed by a flourish.

Hilary Penman

Manager, Ministerial and Executive Services

Annex 1: Document Schedule

Doc #	Date	Title of Document	Decision on Request
1	30 June 2025	Email from: Matthew Winthrop to Senior Leadership Team Subject: RE: Media query: Potential merger MoT/MfE/MHud	Released with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a). Some information has been marked out of scope.
2	30 June 2025	Email from: Ruth Fairhall to Managers, Directors and Senior Leadership Team Subject: Media query about machinery of government changes	Release in full
3	1 July 2025	Email from: Ruth Fairhall to AllMOT Subject: Media speculation about machinery of government changes	Released with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a).
4	2 July 2025	All MoT Notes	Released in full. Some information has been marked out of scope.

Neha Pawar

From: Matthew Winthrop
Sent: Monday, 30 June 2025 4:04 pm
To: Senior Leadership Team
Cc: Peta Baily Gibson
Subject: RE: Media query: Potential merger MoT/MfE/MHud

As an update to this, the following email is for Ruth to send to staff (initially to managers) so people don't first hear about the suggested merger in the news. While we don't know for sure when the story will run in BusinessDesk, we can assume it will be as early as tomorrow morning.

You may have seen or are about to see a story in the media about a suggestion that the Public Service Commission is working on a proposal to merge the Ministry with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and the Ministry for the Environment.

I appreciate that you may find this news unsettling and it will raise a number of questions for you. The Commission provides ongoing advice on machinery of government changes if they can deliver efficiencies and value to taxpayers. Ultimately, mergers and changes to machinery of government are questions for Ministers and the Public Service Commission, and media speculation isn't helpful. Should I have anything to share about this in the future, I will do so, as I have with the continuation of acting CE arrangements. If you have any questions or concerns, please talk to your manager in the first instance.

From: Matthew Winthrop
Sent: Monday, 30 June 2025 1:54 pm
To: Senior Leadership Team <SLT@transport.govt.nz>
Cc: Peta Baily Gibson <P.BailyGibson@transport.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: Media query: Potential merger MoT/MfE/MHud

Fyi – this morning BusinessDesk approached us and other agencies for comment on a proposed merger with HUD and MfE, which we referred to PSC. Their response is attached and key messages in the email below.

Query s 9(2)(a), **BusinessDesk**

I have received a tipoff that the Public Service Commission is investigating merging some ministries, namely the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, the Ministry for the Environment, and the Ministry of Transport.

Just wondered if your Ministry had anything to say in relation to the idea/proposal.

Out of Scope

Neha Pawar

From: Ruth Fairhall
Sent: Monday, 30 June 2025 6:35 pm
To: Managers & Directors; Senior Leadership Team
Cc: Peta Baily Gibson; Matthew Winthrop
Subject: Media query about machinery of government changes

Kia ora koutou

I would like to give you all a heads up about an article which we expect to appear in Business Desk, possibly as early as tomorrow morning. Below is the message I intend to send to staff in the morning. I appreciate you won't be able to answer questions from your teams about this, so if you do get some, it would be good to emphasise that no decisions have been made and that I will share any information if and when I have something to share. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to talk to me or your DCE.

Ngā mihi

Ruth

Kia ora koutou

You may have seen, or may shortly see, a story in the media about a suggestion that the Public Service Commission is working on a proposal to merge the Ministry with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and the Ministry for the Environment.

I appreciate that you may find this news unsettling and it will raise some questions for you. The Commission provides ongoing advice on machinery of government changes if they can deliver efficiencies and value to taxpayers. Ultimately, mergers and changes to machinery of government are questions for Ministers and the Public Service Commission, and media speculation isn't helpful.

It is important to emphasise that at this stage, no decisions have been made. Should I have anything to share about this in the future, I will do so, as I have with the continuation of acting CE arrangements. If you have any concerns, please talk to your manager in the first instance.

Ngā mihi

Ruth

Neha Pawar

From: Ruth Fairhall
Sent: Tuesday, 1 July 2025 7:58 am
To: AllMOT; Ministers Office
Subject: Media speculation about machinery of government changes

Kia ora koutou

You may have seen, or may shortly see, a story in the media about a suggestion that the Public Service Commission is working on a proposal to merge the Ministry with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and the Ministry for the Environment.

I appreciate that you may find this news unsettling and it will raise some questions for you. The Commission provides ongoing advice on machinery of government changes if they can deliver efficiencies and value to taxpayers. Ultimately, mergers and changes to machinery of government are questions for Ministers and the Public Service Commission, and media speculation isn't helpful.

It is important to emphasise that at this stage, no decisions have been made. Should I have anything to share about this in the future, I will do so, as I have with the continuation of acting CE arrangements. If you have any concerns, please talk to your manager in the first instance.

Ngā mihi

Ruth

Ruth Fairhall

Acting Secretary for Transport & Acting Chief Executive

Ministry of Transport | Te Manatu Waka

M: s 9(2)(a) | E: r.fairhall@transport.govt.nz | transport.govt.nz

Executive Assistant: Sharyn Forty | M: s 9(2)(a) | E: s.forty@transport.govt.nz

All MoT notes 2 July 2025

Out of Scope

RELEASED UNDER
THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

Ruth - Business Desk article

I am sure most of you have now read the article published yesterday suggesting the Public Service Commission is working on a proposal to merge the Ministry with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and the Ministry for the Environment.

I would like to take a moment to reiterate the message in the email I sent to you all yesterday.

The Commission provides ongoing advice on machinery of government changes if they can deliver efficiencies and value to taxpayers.

No decisions have been made, and I will keep you all updated when I do hear more on this.

At the Ministry we have a highly engaged organisation that has received high praise from the Minister on policy advice we have provided.

Please keep doing the great work you have been doing.

Out of Scope

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