

15 August 2022

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I refer to your email of 25 July 2022 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

I hereby ask that pursuant to the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982 that you are to forward me the total and complete records of payments made by the New Zealand Government to the following officials of the Government of Tonga for the past 5 years, for each one of them:

- i. Aminiasi Kefu*
- ii. Sione Sisifa*
- iii. Linda Folaumoetui*
- iv. Aisea Taumoepeau*
- v. Alisi Taumoepeau*
- vi. Lord Dalgety*
- vii. Justice Charles Cato*
- viii. Justice Whitten*
- ix. Justice Laki Niu*

Searches of the Ministry's records were made both in Aotearoa New Zealand and in Tonga. Those searches did not match any of the above-named individuals to grants or payments for services as a supplier to Aotearoa New Zealand's International Development Cooperation (IDC) programme.

There are no records of any direct payments to any of the above-named individuals under the Pacific Justice Strengthening Programme (PJSP) or its previous Aotearoa New Zealand-managed phase, the Judicial Pacific Participation Fund (JPPF). Payments for travel costs to individuals might have been made in relation to these programmes, but travel costs are not recorded in a format that breaks payments down to an individual level. It is therefore possible travel costs were paid to, or on behalf of, the named individuals.

The programmes mentioned above are the only avenues where the New Zealand Government, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, would have made payments to individuals directly. Therefore we are refusing your request under section 18(e) of the OIA as the information you requested does not exist.

Please note that we might publish this letter (with your personal details redacted) on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's website.

If you have any questions about this decision, you can contact us by email at: DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz. You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision by contacting www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SC', written in a cursive style.

Sarah Corbett
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade