

25 October 2023

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OIA 28825

Tēnā koe Personal details removed for proactive release

I refer to your email of 27 September 2023 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

'Would you be able to provide a list of countries which have established "diplomatic relations" with the Cook Islands and Niue respectively? Please also give each date of establishment.'

The Cook Islands and Niue have a special constitutional relationship with New Zealand. In 1965 and 1974, following an act of self-determination under United Nations auspices the Cook Islands and Niue respectively became self-governing in "free association with New Zealand". Following this, both countries adopted their own constitutions and established their own governments.

Both countries have their own individual international legal personalities, conducting international relations as though they are independent states, and have established diplomatic relations with other countries, as they see fit.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (the Ministry) does not speak on behalf of other governments' diplomatic relations. Your request is therefore refused in full under the following sections of the OIA:

- 7(b): to avoid prejudicing relations between any of the Governments of New Zealand; the self-governing State of the Cook Islands; and the self-governing State of Niue;
- 7(c): to avoid prejudicing the international relations of the Governments of the self-governing State of the Cook Islands; and the self-governing State of Niue.

I note that you can seek this information from the respective governments of Cook Islands and Niue via their High Commissions in Wellington. Contact details for each High Commission can be found on the Ministry's website:

<https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/countries-and-regions/australia-and-pacific/cook-islands/cook-islands-high-commission/>

<https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/countries-and-regions/australia-and-pacific/niue/high-commission-for-niue/>

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Therefore, our response to your request (with your personal information removed) may be published on the Ministry website: www.mfat.govt.nz/en/about-us/contact-us/official-information-act-responses/

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