

1 February 2020

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your Official Information Act request to the Department of Conservation, received on 17 November 2020 in which you asked for:

1. Any team process documentation related to media permits. This information should include, but not be limited to, meeting minutes and file notes.
2. All correspondence sent and received by Lou Sanson and Natasha Hayward on the issue of mainstream media permits, between October 1 this year and October 31.

On 2 December 2020 we extended the due date for your request to 4 February 2021 due to the large quantity of information sought and the consultation necessary.

Please note that we have interpreted the scope of question 1 to include any team process documentation, reports, briefings and guidance prepared when the Department's mainstream media process was established in 2018 and more recently any documentation associated with the ongoing review of the Department's mainstream media process.

As you are aware, the Department is currently undertaking a fresh review of the mainstream media process. The purpose of the review is to ensure that we are supporting the media appropriately within the legislation. We are engaging with the Media Freedom Committee and key representatives of the media to ensure that we understand the role of the media and the range of their functions.

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

1. Any team process documentation related to media permits. This information should include, but not be limited to, meeting minutes and file notes.
2. All correspondence sent and received by Lou Sanson and Natasha Hayward on the issue of mainstream media permits, between October 1 this year and October 31.

Attached as Table 1 is a schedule of documents and correspondence that fall within scope of your request. I have decided to release the documents and correspondence listed in Table 1, subject to information being withheld under one or more of the following sections of the Official Information Act, as applicable:

- personal contact details and signatures, under section 9(2)(a) – to protect the privacy of natural persons, including deceased people.
- maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion, under section 9(2)(g)(i).
- maintain legal professional privilege, under section 9(2)(h).

I regret that I am not able to provide you with all the information you seek. Two documents dated 17 November 2020 and 27 November 2020 are being withheld to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions (section 9(2)(g)(i), and maintain legal professional privilege (section 9(2)(h).

Please note that I have decided to summarise the emails that I have sent and received regarding the issue of mainstream media permits between 1-31 October 2020, as providing these emails in full would impair efficient administration (as provided for by sections 16(1)(e) and 16(2)(a) of the Official Information Act).

Below is a high-level summary of scope and key themes for these emails:

- a significant number of emails sent by the media to the Department's media and communications team and forwarded to myself to keep me informed of the issues the media are experiencing with the Department's mainstream media process.
- a significant number of emails where I, as the accountable Director, endorsed responses to the media (such as yourself) who had asked questions or raised issues about the Department's mainstream media process.
- internal correspondence highlighting the urgency of resolving issues raised by the media, confirming requirements for permits for the media, sharing information about the Department's mainstream media process, and discussing how to respond to enquiries and questions from the media about the mainstream media process.
- administrative emails associated with draft responses to the media, a Departmental briefing, updates and a status report item for the previous Minister of Conservation Hon Eugenie Sage.

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



Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) and enclosed documents may be published on the Department's website.

You are entitled to seek an investigation and review of my decision by writing to an Ombudsman as provided by section 28(3) of the Official Information Act.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Natasha'.

pp Natasha Hayward
Director Planning, Permissions & Land
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



Table 1 - Schedule of documents

Item	Date	Document description	Decision
Documents released in response to question 1			
1	17 July 2018	Task Assignment: Operational Policy recommendations relating to 'breaking news' media	Released in full
2	17 October 2018	Media Authorisation Access Paper: Operational Policy recommendations relating to 'breaking news' media access	Released in part (aspects withheld under s 9(2)(g) (i))
3	14 November 2018	Task Assignment: Implementation of mainstream media authorisation policy	Released in full
4	4 February 2019	Mainstream Media Authorisations Access Final: Implementation of new mainstream media access request process	Released in part (aspects withheld under s 9(2)(g) (i))
5		Mainstream Media Record of Process	Released in full
6	30 October 2020	Briefing for Director General: DOC's mainstream media process	Released in part (aspects withheld under s 9(2)(g) (i))
7	2 November 2020	Task Assignment: Review of mainstream media process	Released in part (aspects withheld under s 9(2)(g) (i))
Correspondence released in response to question 2			
8	16 October 2020	Letter from James Frankham, New Zealand Geographic, to Lou Sanson, regarding mainstream media permit issues	Released in part (aspects withheld under s 9(2)(a) of the OIA)
9	19 October 2020	Letter from Geoff Collett, Media Freedom Committee, to Lou Sanson, regarding mainstream media permit issues	Released in part (aspects withheld under s 9(2)(a) of the OIA)
10	28 October 2020	Letter from Natasha Hayward to Geoff Collett, Media Freedom Committee, regarding mainstream media permit issues	Released in part (aspects withheld under s 9(2)(a) of the OIA)
11	28 October 2020	Letter from Geoff Collett, Media Freedom Committee, to Natasha Hayward, regarding mainstream media permit issues	Released in part (aspects withheld under s 9(2)(a) of the OIA)



12	29 October 2020	Letter from Natasha Hayward to James Frankham, New Zealand Geographic, regarding	Released in part (aspects withheld under s 9(2)(a) of the OIA)
13	1-31 October 2020	Emails sent and received by Lou Sanson regarding mainstream media permit issues	Released in part (aspects withheld under s 9(2)(a) of the OIA)