



Te Kawa Mataaho

Public Service Commission

2 April 2026

9(2)(a) privacy

Dear 9(2)(a) privacy

Official Information Request

Our Ref: OIA 2026-0057

I refer to your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request received on 16 March 2026 asking:

1. *How the Public Service Commissioner assesses whether chief executives are meeting their obligation under section 52 of the Public Service Act 2020 to provide advice to their Minister on the "long-term implications of policies" specifically in relation to cross-portfolio impacts such as the health or mortality consequences of economic policy decisions.*
2. *Whether any chief executive performance review since the Public Service Act 2020 came into force has assessed the quality of cross-portfolio impact advice, particularly where policy decisions in one portfolio (e.g., Finance, Social Development) foreseeably affect outcomes in another (e.g., Health).*
3. *Any guidance issued by the Commissioner under section 12 of the Public Service Act 2020 regarding the stewardship obligation as it applies to cross-portfolio health or mortality impacts of economic policy.*
4. *Whether the Commissioner has identified, in any review of the state of the public service, a gap in cross-agency coordination on the health or mortality impacts of economic, fiscal, or monetary policy.*
5. *Any assessment of whether the "spirit of service to the community" under section 13, and the stewardship principle under section 12, require agencies to proactively advise ministers when policy decisions in their portfolio may increase mortality or health system demand even where another agency nominally "owns" the affected outcome.*

Information being released - Parts one, three and four

The Public Service Commissioner (the Commissioner) reviews the performance of Public Service chief executives through a process of setting annual performance expectations and then completing an annual performance review against those expectations, including receiving advice from responsible ministers on performance. All legislative responsibilities of the chief executive fall within scope of the performance review process. This includes responsibilities under legislation the agency administers, as well as those set out in section 52 of the Public Service Act 2020. Ministerial input into the performance review process is particularly important, both in setting performance expectations and reviewing performance against those expectations.

Part three

The Commissioner has issued a Code of Conduct for the public sector which is supported by [principles guidance](#) which can be found on the Commission's website. However, there is no guidance issued that applies specifically to the health and mortality impacts of economic policy.

Part four

In December 2025, the Commissioner published the [State of the Public Service – Te Kahu Tuatini](#) (the report). The Commissioner did not specifically review cross agency coordination on the health or mortality impacts of economic, fiscal, or monetary policy.

You may be interested in knowing that in the report, the Commissioner noted that the future of the public service may see agencies better organised around citizens. This approach would see grouping agencies with like functions to support policy cohesion and leadership.

Information does not exist - Parts two and five

Chief executive performance reviews do not include detailed assessments of specific pieces of policy advice, and as such, do not consider the quality of cross-portfolio impact. Insights on the quality of an agency's policy advice are gained through a range of mechanisms including the reporting required by agencies with policy appropriations (see [Agency panels and quality reporting - \(DPMC\)](#)) who must report against the [Policy Quality Framework](#) and the results of their [Ministerial Policy Satisfaction Survey](#).

There is no assessment of whether the “spirit of service to the community” and the stewardship principle require agencies to proactively advise Ministers when policy decisions in their portfolio may increase mortality or health system demand.

I am therefore refusing parts two and five of your request under s 18(e) of the OIA, on the grounds the information does not exist.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact Enquiries@publicservice.govt.nz.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that we intend to publish this response (with your personal details removed) on the Commission's website.

Yours sincerely



Nicky Dirks

Manager – Ministerial and Executive Services
Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission