



29 July 2026

9(2)(a) privacy

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Official Information Request
Our Ref: OIA 2026-0216

I refer to your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request received by the Public Service Commission Te Kawa Mataaho (the Commission) on 13 July 2026 for:

“...answers to the following questions.

1. *Can you confirm whether the [Guidance to enable state services agencies to consistently measure and report their usage of contractors and consultants](#) is still in operation and if yes, the date/year of publication?*
2. *Does the Government expectation to reduce reliance on contractors and consultants stem from 2018 (e.g. [GOV-18-MIN-0030](#)), or from some more recent expectation (e.g. minute/speech). Please provide the latest relevant document and ideally provide a link. In case it is helpful, we have set out what we could find:*
 - a. [PSC website](#): OPEX expectation not to exceed \$1.25b annually across the public sector in 2025/26.
 - b. [PSC Guidance](#): 2018 Cabinet decision to reduce reliance on purchased external capability and build core administrative capability.
3. *We noted in 2018 ([GOV-18-MIN-0030](#)) that the Government in 2018 asked the SSC to ‘stop annual reporting of staffing numbers, effective from June 2017’. This was surprising.*
 - a. *Explain the context, with key documents where possible.*
 - b. *Explain when and why SSC/PSC began collecting annual staffing data.*
4. *Regarding the ‘contractor and consultant expenditure’ on your website:*
 - a. *Provide separate contractor and consultant expenditure data by department, for all available years.*
 - b. *Confirm whether the dataset uses the Guidance definition, or provide the current definition and reference document.*
5. *Does PSC collect contractor FTEs and consultant FTEs by departments? If yes, please provide, for each government department (including New Zealand Police*

and the New Zealand Defence Force), the following information from 2000 onwards:

a. Contractor FTEs by department.

b. Consultant FTEs by department.

If FTEs data is not held separately, but is held jointly, please provide 'contractor and consultant FTEs' by Government department."

Information being released – parts one, three, and four

In response to part one of your request, the [Guidance to enable state services agencies to consistently measure and report their usage of contractors and consultants](#) published by the Commission in 2018 remains in operation.

In response to part 3(b) of your request, the Commission (previously known as the State Services Commission) has collected Public Service workforce information in different forms for many years. Before 1988, the Commission ran the Public Service payroll directly. When payroll was devolved to agencies in 1988, the Commission began collecting aggregate staff information from agencies, initially on staff numbers and gender. Through the 1990s, this collection continued on either an ad hoc or regular basis.

In 2000, the Commission moved to collecting unit-record HR data for each Public Service employee through the Human Resources Collection (HRC), approved by Cabinet under EXG (98) M 2/12. This means PSC now holds unit-record workforce data for the Public Service from 2000 onwards.

The collection supports Commission's statutory role and provides evidence to advise government on workforce issues and interventions, support agencies to improve performance through benchmarking, provide open and transparent public reporting, and inform policy decisions by the Commission and other agencies.

In relation to part 4(b) of your request, when completing the contractor and consultant returns that inform the contractor and consultant expenditure dataset published by the Public Service Commission, agencies are referred to the [Guidance](#).

Information publicly available – parts two and three

The following information is covered by parts two and three of your requests and is publicly available on the Beehive website at the links provided for in the table below.

Item	Date	Document Description	Website Address
1	10 October 2024	Part 2: Press release – Brakes put on contractor and consultant spending	https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/brakes-put-contractor-and-consultant-spending
2	9 October 2025	Part 2: Press release – Frontline roles up, spending on contractors down	https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/frontline-roles-spending-contractors-down

3	18 May 2018	Part 3(a): SSC2018/509 – AIDE MEMOIRE – Moving beyond the cap	https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/DirectoryFile/Aide-Memoire-Moving-beyond-the-cap.pdf
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In relation to part two of your request, the original expectation stems from [GOV-18-MIN-0030](#) in June 2018. Subsequent additional government expectations and formal expenditure targets were introduced in 2023 and later years: the \$400m OPEX reduction target across the two years 2023/24 and 2024/25 and the \$1.25b OPEX cap for 2025/26. Announcements relating to the subsequent expenditure targets can be found in press releases issued by Hon Nicola Willis in 2024 and Hon Judith Collins KC, published on the Beehive website.

To provide context for part 3(a) of your request, we note that the 2018 decision referred to stopping annual reporting associated with the former cap on core government administration staffing numbers. The cap had been introduced in 2009 and was monitored through regular reporting to Ministers/Cabinet on the number of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) positions within the capped group. Cabinet agreed in May 2018 to remove that cap and stop the associated annual reporting of staffing numbers, effective from June 2017. This did not end the Commission's broader workforce data collection. The Commission continued to collect workforce information through the Human Resources Collection and successor Workforce Data collection to support statutory monitoring, workforce policy advice, benchmarking, and public reporting.

Accordingly, I have refused your request for the documents listed in the above table under section 18(d) of the OIA on the grounds the information requested is or will soon be publicly available.

Information is not held – parts four and five

In relation to part 4(a) of your request, the contractor and consultant data collection does not distinguish between contractor expenditure and consultant expenditure.

In relation to part five of your request, the Public Service Commission does not collect contractor or consultant FTE information. The Commission only collects FTE information for permanent and fixed-term employees as a measure of workforce context.

Therefore, we are refusing these parts of your request under section 18(g)(i) of the OIA on the grounds that the information requested is not held by the Public Service Commission and we have no grounds for believing the information is held by another government agency.

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
Public Service Commission Te Kawa Mataaho