

Update, Nation Dates, GDS Index and OIA 2020/07

From: Wendy McGuinness <wmcg@mcguinnessinstitute.org>

Date: Friday, 15 January 2021 at 4:56 PM

To: [Government Department email]

Subject: Update, Nation Dates, GDS Index and OIA 2020/07

Attention: [CEO]

Tēnā koe [CEO],

Happy new year!

We hope you and your team have had a relaxing summer break and are ready for the challenges and opportunities that 2021 will bring. This email includes a general update on our work and includes an OIA request on strategies published by your department as at 31 December 2020. Our annual newsletter (as at December 2020) can be found [here](#) and our work programme for 2021 can be found [here](#). You may also be interested in our Briefing to the Incoming Government (BIG), which refers to 'big' ideas for consideration, found [here](#). Lastly, you will receive two complimentary McGuinness Institute publications next week, as explained below.

A: Nation Dates: Timelines of significant events that have shaped the history of Aotearoa New Zealand

Given your commitment to good public policy, we thought you might like a copy of our signature book. It aims to contain all the key dates and events that have shaped recent public policy in New Zealand. We publish a new edition every three years, corresponding with the election year and this is our 4th edition. All Members of Parliament were sent a copy before the summer break. Given recent events in the United States, we consider it is timely for the government to publish a draft civics strategy for New Zealanders and invite feedback, ideally later this year.

B: Long-term insights briefings

In 2021 government organisations must work hard at developing faster and more effective policy responses to complex challenges. However, suggesting and implementing new initiatives in isolation is unlikely to be successful without the support of informed citizens (i.e. the team of 5 million people). In order to support the government, citizens will need to appreciate and understand the complex challenges that our country is facing or may need to face in the future. For this reason, we are delighted that chief executives of government departments now have a new policy instrument to help them do just that. As you will be aware, every chief executive of a government department must now publicly issue a 'long-term insights briefing' from 2021/22 (see [Schedule 8 of the Public Service Act 2020](#)). The fact that this is prepared independently of ministers facilitates space for foresight. We believe that there is a conceptual line that exists between foresight and strategy development, and that the long-term insights briefing must remain solely a foresight tool (i.e. exploring the future). In contrast, government department strategies is where strategy development belongs, focusing on the means to the end (i.e. the how). This brings us to our OIA and the government department strategies.

C: Government Department Strategies Index (GDS) and OIA request

We consider GDS are key documents that drive public policy and reflect a significant investment and commitment by public officials and Members of Parliament. Our interest is in how government department strategies operate together to bring about change.

You may remember we were in the process of updating our earlier GDS Index work at the beginning of 2020, but given the pandemic, we delayed this work for 12 months. We are now writing to create a list of all government department strategies in operation as at 31 December 2020.

[OIA request \(our reference 2021/07\)](#)

To clarify our official information request, we would like answers to the following four questions:

1. **Please list all GDSs that were archived in 2019/2020**, being those that were in operation as at 31 December 2018 (see list attached) but are no longer in operation as at 31 December 2020? Please state the date (e.g., month and year) and the reason the strategy was archived.
2. **Please list GDSs that were moved to another department in 2019/20**, being those that were in operation as at 31 December 2018 but is now being implemented by another government department as at 31 December 2020?
3. **Please list all new GDSs (published in 2019/2020)** (being those that are not on the list as at 31 December 2018)?
4. **Please list all new GDS (published in 2019/2020) that have also been archived in 2019/20?** I expect there will not be many of these.

To help with this exercise we have attached a screenshot of the list of GDSs for your department as at 21 December 2018 from our tables. Searchable tables can also be found on our website [here](#). The second publication we are sending you is the 2018 Government Department Strategies Handbook – He Puna Rautaki. This book also lists all the government department strategies (GDS) in operation as at 31 December 2018.

Once all of the departments have provided a list of the following, we will create a table (similar to that at the link above) for your department to sign off. We are keen to ensure that the list is complete before we start a more detailed analysis of each strategy.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

All the best for 2021,

Wendy McGuinness

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