

Subject: OIA 2025/06 – Cabinet and Cabinet Committee paper statistics
Date: Monday, 9 June 2025 at 9:32:57 AM New Zealand Standard Time
From: Wendy McGuinness
To: [REDACTED]
CC: Greta Balfour
Attachments: image001.jpg

Kia ora,

Our OIA 2025/06 – Cabinet and Cabinet Committee paper statistics

Please note Questions 1-2 are likely to be specific to DPMC and Questions 3-5 are likely to be specific to the PSC. However, given how integrated these questions are, we have treated this request as a joint OIA.

Background

The Institute is finalising Working Paper 2025/03: [List of Climate-related Cabinet Papers Dated Between 2001 and 2024](#) (published as a final draft). While undertaking this work, we found that the public had no consistent or reliable policy framework to access Cabinet papers and Cabinet Committee papers. We think the current process is expensive and time consuming for officials, public servants and citizens. Our paper makes a number of recommendations that we think would solve this problem and save money and time.

To set the context for our recommendations (and enable us to complete our paper), we would like answers to the following questions.

Background: Please keep in mind we expect DPMC will already collect statistics on the number of Cabinet and Cabinet Committee papers in some form. As we do not wish to overladden the system, we are happy to receive the statistics DPMC has already collected, as they may suffice. We have two overarching goals:

Goal 1: To learn more about the numbers of papers in terms of those that are proactively released verses those that are not. We expect you will also have identified a middle category which is proactively released but redacted. For the sake of clarity we have identified three types of papers:

- (i) Private and confidential papers (not released at all)
- (ii) Proactively released papers (approved for release - with some text redacted)
- (iii) Proactively released papers (approved for release - clean)

Table 1: Cabinet papers statistics

Year ended	Number of papers submitted to Cabinet (Col A)	(i) Private and confidential papers (not released at all) (Col B)	(ii) Proactively released papers (approved for release - with some text redacted) (Col C)	(iii) Proactively released papers (approved for release - clean) (Col D)
XX XX XXXX				
XX XX XXXX				
XX XX XXXX				
XX XX XXXX				
XX XX XXXX				

Table 2: Cabinet Committee papers statistics – Note: we would prefer a table per committee (e.g. 2(a), 2(b), etc)

Year	Number of papers	(i) Private and	(ii) Proactively	(iii) Proactively
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	submitted to Cabinet Committees (ideally by committee) (Col A)	confidential papers (not released at all) (Col B)	released papers (approved for release - with some text redacted) (Col C)	released papers (approved for release - clean) (Col D)
XX XX XXXX				
XX XX XXXX				
XX XX XXXX				
XX XX XXXX				
XX XX XXXX				

Note: Based on our understanding of the system, the figures in Col B, C and D should equal Col A.

This leads to the following three questions:

QUESTIONS:

1. Can you complete Tables 1 and 2 (the latter table, ideally by committee)? The aim is to provide the number of *Cabinet papers* and *Cabinet Committee papers* that are *submitted* during a set period of time (this could be by calendar year, by financial year or by six month period, etc)? Ideally, for each of the last five years (since 2000).
2. If Col B, C and D do not equal Col A, can you explain in detail the reason for this?

Goal 2: To learn more about how it is possible that *Cabinet papers* or *Cabinet Committee papers* that are approved to be proactively released by Cabinet but in the end are not released. This appears to be a system failure. While exploring this issue we came across a report titled [Proactive release of Cabinet papers: January to June 2024](#). It was found on the Public Service Commissions website. The report includes key results for the proactive release of Cabinet papers. I have attached an image of the relevant table to explain the issue.

QUESTIONS:

3. Can you provide the statistics for the second half of 2024 (Jul-Dec), so that we can update the table below? (FYI: a copy of this table can be found on our working paper, and we would like to add this new information to our existing table)
4. Can you explain why releases approved by Cabinet are not actually released? For example why was 402 approved to be released but only 233 actually released?
5. Can you explain what actions have been taken since the report (dated August 2024) to ensure that all those approved to be released are actually released to the public?

Excerpt from [Proactive release of Cabinet papers: January to June 2024](#).

2. Key results for the proactive release of Cabinet papers, with comparison to the previous reporting period are:			
	Measure	Jan – Jun 2024	Jul – Dec 2023
A	Papers approved for release within the reporting period	402	401
B	Papers released	233 (58%)	257 (64%)
C	Papers released within policy (30 working days or delay envisaged by the policy, as a % of B)	191 (82%)	209 (81%)

	D	Papers released within 30 working days (as a % of B)	160 (69%)	177 (69%)
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Many thanks for your help. If you have any questions or points of clarification, do not hesitate to contact me.

Best wishes, Wendy

Wendy McGuinness
Chief Executive

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