



Te Pā Whakamarumarū
New Zealand Security
Intelligence Service

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 www.nzsis.govt.nz

20 March 2023

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Official information request

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request of 13 February 2023 to the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (NZSIS) seeking the following information:

1. *A detailed breakdown of costs incurred by the NZSIS for the issuing of national security clearances. Please include the following in the breakdown:*
 - a. *Time and labour per activity undertaken*
 - b. *Level of person doing the work based on NZSIS salary/seniority bands, and the reason that that band has been allocated the work*
 - c. *Experience and ability of the person(s) involved for each activity*
 - d. *Skill, knowledge and responsibility required to person the services properly for each activity,*
 - e. *Time limitations and factors i.e. efficiency calculations and whether each work item has been timed and assessed and the method applied,*
 - f. *Complexity of the matter*
 - g. *The percentage (%) of the working by a person or automated, respectively*
 - h. *Assumptions, if any,*
 - i. *The split between operations costs and staffing costs*
2. *Benchmarking with other agencies/authorities for costs for related/similar services.*

The timeframe for response was extended to 27 March 2023 to allow for the consultations necessary to make a decision on your request.

Response

Part 1, 1(a) and 1(i) – breakdown of costs incurred for issuing national security clearances; time and labour per activity undertaken; split between operations and staffing costs

I am refusing parts 1, 1(a) and 1(i) of your request under section 6(a) of the OIA, as making the information available would be likely to prejudice the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand.

While the NZSIS aims to be as transparent as possible about our activities, the nature of our work often means there is information we cannot disclose. The detailed financial and process information you have requested would, if released, provide an insight into our

capabilities and must therefore be kept confidential to protect our ability to carry out our national security roles and functions.

Parts 1(b), 1(c) and 1(d) – level of person doing the work and reason for salary band allocation; experience and ability; skill, knowledge and responsibility required

I have attached position descriptions for Vetting Officers and Vetting Analysts, who primarily carry out the vetting process. The position descriptions will give you an indication of the position size and the requisite skills, knowledge and experience of the position holders.

Positions are allocated to pay bands based on their size, as determined by a job evaluation process. The pay band assigned to a position assists with internal pay parity and consistency, and enables comparison with the external market.

Part 1(e) – time limitations and factors

Security Vetting has timeliness Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) agreed with the government. These KPIs are set out in the 2021/22 NZSIS Annual Report (page 42) and are available on our website (see: www.nzsis.govt.nz/about-us/our-annual-reports/).

Each component of the Security Vetting process has been time assessed, through a time and motion study. I am withholding this information under section 6(a) of the OIA as making it available would be likely to prejudice national security.

Part 1(f) – complexity

Each security clearance is assessed against the security assessment criteria and adjudicative guidelines that are outlined in the Protective Security Requirements (see the 'getting a national security clearance' section at www.protectivesecurity.govt.nz).

During this assessment process, a variety of complex issues may be identified and assessed, which can add time to the overall assessment (examples are set out on the protective security website).

Part 1(g) – percentage by person / automation

All of the vetting assessment processes are manual and staff are supported by a case management system.

Part 1(h) – assumptions, if any

We hold no information on assumptions and this part of your request is therefore refused under section 18(g) of the OIA – the information is not held and we have no reason to believe it is held by, or more closely connected to the functions of another department.

Part 2 – benchmarking with other agencies

We have benchmarked our national security clearance process with overseas partners, however I am refusing to release details under section 6(a) of the OIA, as making the information available would be likely to prejudice the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand.

Review

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact oya.privacy@nzsis.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 the NZSIS proactively publishes OIA responses in accordance with the expectations of Te Kawa Mataaho/the Public Service Commission. We intend to publish this letter (with your personal information removed) and enclosed documents on the NZSIS website. Publication of such responses is done on a quarterly basis.

Ngā mihi

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil McKee', written over a large, light-colored oval shape that serves as a background for the signature.

Phil McKee

Te Tumu Whakarae mō Te Pā Whakamarumarū
Acting Director-General of Security



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POSITION DESCRIPTION

Vetting Officer / Āpiha Arotake Tangata

Unit/Branch, Directorate: Protective Security Directorate

Location: Wellington

Salary range: G \$83,700 – 106,950

About the Public Service

Ka mahitahi mātou o te ratonga tūmatanui kia hei painga mō ngā tāngata o Aotearoa i āiane, ā, hei ngā rā ki tua hoki. He kawenga tino whitake tā mātou hei tautoko i te Karauna i runga i āna hononga ki a ngāi Māori i raro i te Tiriti o Waitangi. Ka tautoko mātou i te kāwanatanga manapori. Ka whakakotahingia mātou e te wairua whakarato ki ō mātou hāpori, ā, e arahina ana mātou e ngā mātāpono me ngā tikanga matua o te ratonga tūmatanui i roto i ā mātou mahi.

In the public service we work collectively to make a meaningful difference for New Zealanders now and in the future. We have an important role in supporting the Crown in its relationships with Māori under the Treaty of Waitangi. We support democratic government. We are unified by a spirit of service to our communities and guided by the core principles and values of the public service in our work.

About Us

Ko te whāinga matua o Te Pā Whakamarumarū ko te tiaki, ko te haumarū i a Aotearoa, me te motu whānui hoki. E pūmau ana ā mātou tāngata ki tō mātou whāinga mātua, ā, ka whakatinana i ō mātou tikanga ia rā: Mahi Tahī, Tū Māia, Ngākaupai, Uruhi me te Aro-whaiaro.

NZSIS's mission is to keep New Zealand and New Zealanders safe and secure. Our people are dedicated to our mission and live our values, every day: Collaborative, Courageous, Positive, Drive and Self-aware.

Purpose of position:

The Vetting Officer (VO) exists to conduct background investigations, interview nominated Government employees and their referees; assess all information gathered against the Protective Security Requirements (PSR), and report on the suitability of candidates to hold national security clearances.

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The scope and detail of enquiries vary according to the level of security clearance sought. All information gathered is assessed against the Protective Security Requirements (PSR) and Adjudicative Guidelines (AG) resulting in the recommendation on the suitability of candidates to hold national security clearances at Confidential, Secret, Top Secret and Top Secret Special level.

Protective Security purpose:

The Protective Security (PS) Directorate delivers a full range of protective security functions to the New Zealand Intelligence Community (NZIC) and for New Zealand. Our focus is also on leveraging the strong foundations that we have established to enhance our recognition as a NZIC protective security exemplar and to assist key New Zealand institutions to mitigate their insider threat risks through effective security clearance management, vetting services and counter intelligence functions.

The PS Directorate also leads the implementation of the Protective Security Requirements (PSR) programme, which aims to substantially improve the security culture of the public service and, potentially, the private sector.

Key accountabilities	Deliverables/Outcomes
Assessments and outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completes all necessary information assessments to a suitable and consistent standard with guidance and support as necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Candidate and referee interviews are conducted in a timely, friendly and professional manner and all relevant information is elicited.• Identified vulnerabilities are investigated and mitigated to support a candidate's suitability to hold a national security clearance.• In the case of an unfavourable recommendation, all notes and records support the assessment.• Assessments are objectively produced in a procedurally fair manner, fulfil requirements, are timely, and of a consistently high standard.
Analysis and decision making <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follows prescribed processes and procedures to provide consistent analysis of information assessments to accurately inform national security clearance recommendations with guidance and support as necessary.• Fully comprehends their role and responsibilities and the associated risks and upholds operational security requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessments and recommendations are made in accordance with the PSR.• The ability to listen is demonstrated when their own ideas are challenged and can justify their own position and actions.• Reports are produced relatively independently and are of a high standard.• Recommendation letters for a national security clearance are inline with the PSR and



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Key accountabilities	Deliverables/Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses specialist systems and databases, and open sourced research information, to inform analysis and recommendations. 	<p>clearly identify any qualifications or residual concerns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NZSIS is represented in a professional manner in all interviews. • Sound knowledge of analytic best practice is applied to work on a variety of problems including some more complex.
<p>Internal and external relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credibly engages with internal and external stakeholders, candidates and referees. • Represents the NZSIS in a professional manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal and external stakeholders report positive and effective working relationships. • NZSIS is represented effectively and its reputation enhanced in interactions with key government customers and colleagues. • Conflict is dealt with when it arises but is raised with vetting management when required.
<p>Subject matter expertise/ Professional development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expertise in a vetting subject area is gained that is of benefit to the NZSIS and to professional development. • Individual training development plan is up to date.
<p>Contribution to team and unit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to business planning, team, unit and/or directorate. • Participates in team activities. • Time and workload is efficiently managed and a strong work ethic demonstrated.
<p>Understanding environmental context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of the current threats to New Zealand security and possible impacts on vetting decisions is displayed. • Role and responsibilities are understood and the associated risks and operational security requirements are upheld. • Different vetting outcomes and the impacts of each are understood and the vetting process is navigated consistently to determine an appropriate outcome. • Relevant legislation and doctrine is appropriately interpreted and translated in daily practice and the requirements for all levels of vetting are understood.



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Key accountabilities	Deliverables/Outcomes
Risk management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All activities take account of security, operational and organisation reputational risk and these risks are managed to approved standards and escalated to management where appropriate. • All activities are consistent with NZSIS legally mandated role and functions.
Health and safety (for self) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work safely and take responsibility for keeping self and colleagues free from harm. • Report all incidents and hazards promptly. • Know what to do in the event of an emergency. • Cooperate in implementing return to work plans. • Be a visible role model at all times. • Follow NZSIS’s safety rules and procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A safe and healthy workplace for all people using our sites as a place of work. • All requirements in the NZIC Health and Safety policy and procedures are met.
Other duties	Any other duties that fall within the scope of the position.

Position delegation	
Financial delegation:	None

Key stakeholders	
Internal:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NZSIS and GCSB staff
External:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Zealand Government Departments • New Zealand Government security management staff, national security clearance holders and security vetting candidates and referees • Inspector General of Security and Intelligence • Any other body or person responsible for the security of New Zealand government people, information or assets.



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Person Specification	
Experience:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considerable experience in a role or roles that involved interviewing, investigative or information gathering and analysis work and the evaluation and assessment of that information. • Ability to use databases and other systems to find, analyse and report on information. • A good listener who is able to understand and adapt to their audience. • Well developed verbal and written communication skills. • Ability to steer and implement change in real time and deal with uncertainty.
Knowledge and Skills:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of the Protective Security Requirements. • Educated and/ or suitably knowledgeable to enable competent use of systems, databases and technology, including internet use and open source research.
Qualifications and Courses:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 4 – 5 years general secondary schooling / National Diploma Level 5 or equivalent transferable experience. • A valid and clean full New Zealand Driver's licence.
Specific Job Requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-motivated, innovative and possessing enthusiasm and drive. • Demonstrated high levels of integrity. • Demonstrates public service professionalism and probity. • Demonstrates self-awareness and a commitment to personal development. • Takes initiative and employs sound judgement. • Confident, flexible and resilient. • Ability to obtain and maintain a Top Secret Special security clearance.



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Diversity and Inclusion

The NZSIS recognises that our success requires us to have a workforce that reflects the community we serve and diversity in its widest context – where all people, regardless of difference are valued and respected.

One way we show our inclusion of those with diverse sexual and gender identities is with a Rainbow Tick accreditation which we proudly received in 2019 and were re-certified in 2021.

We are committed to building a workplace where we can say we have achieved – *He waka eke noa* – a canoe which we are all in with no exception.

Changes to Position Description

Positions in the NZSIS may change over time as the organisation develops. Therefore we are committed to maintaining a flexible organisation structure that best enables us to meet changing market and customer needs. Responsibilities for this position may change over time as the job evolves. This Position Description may be reviewed as part of planning for the annual performance cycle.

Date PD reviewed: 6/06/2022

Signatures		
Manager's Name		
Signature		Date:
Employee's Name		
Signature		Date:



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POSITION DESCRIPTION

Vetting Analyst

Unit/Branch, Directorate:	Security Vetting Unit, Protective Security Directorate
Location:	Auckland and Wellington
Direct reports:	No
Salary range:	E \$60,473 - \$77,271

About the Public Service

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and counter intelligence functions.

The PS Directorate also leads the implementation of the Protective Security Requirements (PSR) programme, which aims to substantially improve the security culture of the public service and, potentially, the private sector.

Purpose of position: The Vetting Analyst exists to:

- Engage in the security vetting process and conducts background investigations into nominated government employees and contractors. The scope and detail of enquiries vary according to the level of national security clearance sought;
- All information gathered is assessed against the Protective Security Requirements (PSR) and Adjudicative Guidelines (AG) resulting in the recommendation on the suitability of candidates to hold national security clearances at Confidential, Secret, Top Secret and Top Secret Special level.

Key accountabilities	Deliverables/Outcomes
<p>Assessments and outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate information provided is assessed and any areas of sensitivity or vulnerability identified. • Gaps or conflicting information is identified and further information is elicited from the candidate or third parties. • Further background enquiries are undertaken if deemed necessary, and an assessment is made to determine if a referral for interview as appropriate. • Assessments and recommendations are made in accordance with the PSR and Adjudicator Guidelines. • High quality judgement is consistently demonstrated. • National security clearance recommendations can be relied upon by government departments. • Security clearance applications are processed effectively and in a timely manner to ensure targets are met.
<p>Written work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written documents are produced to a high professional standard, and prepared and delivered in a timely manner, supporting effective decision making within the NZSIS. • Recommendation letters for national security clearances are inline with the PSR



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	<p>and Adjudicator Guidelines and clearly identify any qualifications or residual concerns.</p>
<p>Internal and external relationships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NZSIS is represented effectively and our reputation is enhanced in interactions with, candidates, referees, Vetting Officers and peers. • Internal and external stakeholders report positive and effective working relationships. • Effective contributions are made to team discussions and meetings and to overall team development.
<p>Administration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All NZSIS policies and procedures are adhered to.
<p>Contribution to Team and Unit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to business planning, team, unit and/or directorate. • Participates in team activities. • Manages their time and workload; is punctual and demonstrates a strong work ethic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They make effective contributions to team discussions and meetings. • They contribute to overall team development including providing guidance to Vetting Analysts as required. • They are deemed a valued and productive member of the security vetting unit and their team.
<p>Personal organisation and time management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They adapt quickly to changing priorities and respond with an appropriate sense of urgency. • They model effective management of own time, are punctual, respectful of and well-prepared when utilising the time of colleagues. • They employ robust strategies to manage their own stress and demonstrate a sustainable work-life balance. • They monitor and assess their own work performance to inform caseload decisions and performance management discussions and employ discretion in the vetting and wider NZSIS contexts.
<p>Risk management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All activities take account of security, operational and organisation reputational risk and these risks are managed to approved standards and escalated to management where appropriate. • All activities are consistent with NZSIS



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	legally mandated role and functions.
Health and safety (for self) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work safely and take responsibility for keeping self and colleagues free from harm. • Report all incidents and hazards promptly. • Know what to do in the event of an emergency. • Cooperate in implementing return to work plans. • Be a visible role model at all times. • Follow NZSIS's safety rules and procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A safe and healthy workplace for all people using our sites as a place of work. • All requirements in the NZIC Health and Safety policy and procedures are met.
Other duties	Any other duties that fall within the scope of the position.

Position delegation	
Financial delegation:	None

Key stakeholders	
Internal:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security Vetting Unit staff • Protective Security Directorate staff • Other areas of NZSIS as required
External:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates • Referees • Various NZ Government security clearance management staff • Inspector General of Security and Intelligence

Person Specification	
Experience:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in investigative or information gathering and analysis work. • Evaluation and assessment of information using a risk based approach.
Knowledge and Skills:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competent in technology, including internet use and open source research. • Highly skilled in the use of databases and other systems to find, analyse and report on information.



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Qualifications and Courses:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 4 – 5 years general secondary schooling / National Diploma Level 5 or equivalent transferable experience.
Specific Job Requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent verbal and written communication. • Initiative and sound judgement. • Confidence, flexibility and resilience. • Self-motivated, innovative and possessing enthusiasm and drive. • Strong interpersonal skills with the ability to elicit information and discuss sensitive subjects in a discreet non-judgemental manner. • Highly developed verbal and written communication skills. • Demonstrated high levels of integrity and an ability to obtain and maintain a TSS security clearance. • Demonstrates public service professionalism and probity. • Demonstrates self-awareness and a commitment to personal development.

Diversity and Inclusion

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Date PD reviewed: 7/04/2022



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Signatures		
Manager's Name		
Signature		Date:
Employee's Name		
Signature		Date:



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