



27 February 2024

File Ref: OIA 48109

[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your information request dated 29 January 2024. You asked for the following information:

“request all internal communication in the Ministry from August 2023 to now, regarding job cuts and savings targets.

Please also provide the amount of FTEs and the proposed ideal amount of FTEs under the new Government's cost saving model in the public service.

In addition, am I please able to get a copy of communication between the Ministry and the Minister, on the topic of cost savings, job cuts, and potential restructuring”?

Your request has been considered in accordance with the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

10 documents have been identified in scope of your request. The documents and my decisions regarding the release of the information are set out in the table attached as Appendix A.

The information in scope of your request for the amount of FTEs and communication between Te Puni Kōkiri and the Minister, is withheld under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act, to protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials.

In making the decision to withhold information, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Act.

I trust my response satisfies your request.

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

Please note that Te Puni Kōkiri publishes some of its OIA responses on its website, after the response is sent to the requester. The responses published are those that are considered to have a high level of public interest. We will not publish your name, address or contact details.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request with us, including this decision, please feel free to contact us at uia@tpk.govt.nz.

Ngā mihi

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Terina Cowan'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'C' at the end.

Terina Cowan
Hautū, Te Puni Whakahaere Tikanga | Deputy Secretary, Strategy, Finance and
Performance

Appendix A: Documents - OIA request from [REDACTED] dated 29 January 2024

Item	Date	Document description	Decision
1.	6 September 2023	A thing done right endures – all of staff correspondence	Released with some content out of scope
2.	28 September 2023	Financial constraints - Excerpt from the 28 September edition of the internal Te Puni Kōkiri newsletter	Released in full
3.	4 October 2023	Our Fiscal Sustainability - Story published on Te Puni Kōkiri intranet on Wednesday, 4 October 2023	Released in full
4.	4 October 2023	Cost saving measures agreed by ELT	Released in full
5.	4 October 2023	Cost saving measure FAQ's	Released in full
6.	19 October 2023	All-kaimahi hui - a change in government – all of staff correspondence	Released in full
7	14 December 2023	Briefing Paper: <i>Fiscal Sustainability – Savings Initiatives – 47977</i>	Withheld in full under section 9(2)(f)(iv)

8	19 January 2024	Briefing Paper: <i>Fiscal Sustainability – Budget 2024 - 48073</i>	Withheld in full under section 9(2)(f)(iv)
9	8 February 2024	Briefing Paper: <i>Fiscal Sustainability – Budget 2024 – 48092</i>	Withheld in full under section 9(2)(f)(iv)
10	15 February 2024	Briefing Paper: <i>Revised Budget 2024 Submission – Vote Māori Development - 48092</i>	Withheld in full under section 9(2)(f)(iv)

Story published to Te Pū Matua, the Te Puni Kōkiri intranet on Wednesday 6 September 2023

A thing done right endures

Yesterday morning Dave shared his reflections on our whakapapa as an organisation and what might come our way over the next few months.

Out of Scope



As we approach this year's General Election, especially with ongoing financial constraints, we need to remind ourselves of why we exist, our vision and our role in Aotearoa New Zealand. This is particularly important when we find ourselves operating in spaces that are not always comfortable.

By staying connected to our purpose, through change and uncertainty, we continue to ensure whānau can stand, thrive and belong.

Dave left us with a handful of take-away messages:

- Change is a constant
- Our history has been one of resilience
- History shows us that we have continued to successfully adapt to our environment
- We must stay connected to our purpose

We know that the election is likely to bring further change. Our role is to serve the government of the day, and we will continue to operate as politically neutral public servants. Regardless of the outcome, we will display our resilience, and we will adapt. We will hold on to our vision, purpose and our role and continue to deliver on the promise of the Treaty, signed long ago.

A big thanks to all staff who asked pātai. Here is a quick summary:

- Will TPK exist if there is a change in government? Māori, Dave suggested, are not going anywhere. TPK is enshrined in legislation and that would need to be repealed. History shows us that TPK is an adaptive Ministry, and we will serve the government of the day.
- Should we worry about job cuts? Dave indicated he was confident the immediate savings we need to make (2% or \$11M) will not impact on current personnel.

Out of Scope



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Excerpt from the 28 September edition of Te Puni Kōkiri Pānui, the internal Te Puni Kōkiri newsletter.

Content also published to Te Pū Matua, the Te Puni Kōkiri intranet on Friday 29 September.

Financial constraints

Earlier this month, I spoke with you all about change, our history of resilience and our ability to successfully adapt to our environment.

Te Puni Kōkiri operates in an exposed space with very high expectations placed on us – we know this is not new, but we always rise to whatever challenge comes our way.

The challenge we constantly face is change. We see change internally, for example in policy decisions, or externally with the cost-of-living pressures and extreme weather events.

The challenge we find ourselves in today is Government's fiscal sustainability and constraints – both the known and unknown.

You'll be aware from my kōrero and from what's been in the news, we have been asked by Government to find 2% or \$11 million in savings per annum here at Te Puni Kōkiri.

ELT has identified and agreed to some immediate savings that will help us meet this requirement.

Financial delegations, travel, vehicle use, contractor spend, tighter recruitment decisions and remuneration are the key areas we're looking to make immediate changes.

It's expected that we will be required to offer further cost savings beyond 2% and will be looking at some medium- and long-term cost savings balanced against the need to continue to deliver for whānau today and into the future.

This is in no way a reflection on the quality of our work, importance of our kaupapa or our kaimahi. Other agencies have been asked to do a similar exercise.

We'll share more information about where we are making savings, as well as some FAQs for kaimahi on Te Pū Matua next week.

I understand that change can be unsettling for some of our Te Puni Kōkiri whānau so please, reach out to your manager, and if you need, make use of our EAP services.

I am confident that by standing together, we will weather this, as we've done before, and as we'll do in the future.

Mauria te pono,
Dave

Story published to Te Pū Matua, the Te Puni Kōkiri intranet on Wednesday, 4 October 2023

Our fiscal sustainability - further information

In last week's pānui, Dave shared with kaimahi that we have been asked by Government to find 2% or \$11 million in savings per annum.

We promised to provide further information on where these savings are coming from and answer some questions you may have. Please take some time to read the attached Cost Saving Measures and FAQs to understand how our approach may impact the way we carry out our mahi.

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The challenge we constantly face is change. We see change internally, for example in policy decisions, or externally with the cost-of-living pressures and extreme weather events.

The challenge we find ourselves in today is Government's fiscal sustainability and constraints – both the known and unknown.

We have identified, and ELT has agreed to, some immediate savings that will help us meet this requirement. Attached you will find the list of cost saving measures, that are effective immediately.

In considering the savings options, ELT has considered the need to preserve our workforce capability to ensure delivery of our strategy and meeting our essential and legislative compliance requirements.

It's expected that we will be required to offer further cost savings beyond 2% and will be looking at some medium- and long-term cost savings balanced against the need to continue to deliver for whānau today and into the future.

This is in no way a reflection on the quality of our work, importance of our kaupapa or our kaimahi. Other agencies have been asked to do a similar exercise.

We understand that change can be unsettling for some of our Te Puni Kōkiri whānau so please, reach out to your manager, and if you need, make use of our [EAP services](#).

We are confident that by standing together, we will weather this, as we've done before, and as we'll do in the future.

Mauri ora,
Your ELT

Attached Files

- Cost saving measures agreed by ELT
- Cost saving measures FAQs

26 Mahuru - ELT has agreed to the following cost saving measures:

- The centralisation of all uncommitted contractor and consultant budgets. If you are to engage contractors and consultants, this will need to be approved and signed by two Deputy Secretaries, one of whom must be Deputy Secretary SFP (delegations beyond Deputy Secretaries will still need to progress through governance to ELT for approval).
- A recruitment pause for all roles that are not under active recruitment. Associated funding will be centralised as per our current process.
- To ensure critical roles can still be recruited to, approval will be required from two Deputy Secretaries, one of whom must be Deputy Secretary OS.
- The approval to create new roles outside of current establishment will be required from two Deputy Secretaries, one of whom must be Deputy Secretary OS.
- Any out of cycle remuneration increases to be approved by ELT.
- All international travel will require ELT endorsement prior to CE approval.
- The use of flexi-fares to be used when attending external events only, and can only be approved by Deputy Secretaries. If you are attending internal events/ hui, only regular fares are permitted.
- Any event (including internal hui) where total costs are likely to exceed \$10k (including travel, venue hire, catering, and any other costs) to be approved by two Deputy Secretaries, one of whom must be the Deputy Secretary SFP.
- Restrict vehicle "allocation" to Regional Directors and Deputy Secretaries only. Pre-approval of all other allocations and associated Fringe Benefit Tax (FBT) by the responsible Deputy Secretary.
- Lift all financial delegations to Deputy Secretaries and Directors only.

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Financial Sustainability Paper - FAQs

1. **What decisions have ELT made?** You'll be aware from Dave's kōrero and from what's been in the news, we have been asked by Government to find 2% or \$11 million per annum in savings. ELT has identified, and agreed to some immediate savings that will help us meet this requirement. Please refer to the list of Cost Saving Measures, that are effective immediately. ELT wanted to let our staff know about these decisions immediately so we can face them together.
2. **Our work is important, why do we have to find savings?** This is no reflection on the importance of our kaupapa or the work you do. It is an all of Government exercise that Government agencies have been asked to do.
3. **How much money are we talking?** We have been asked by the PSC to find 2% (\$11M per annum) of savings across TPK immediately. Other agencies have been asked to find savings in their budgets too.
4. **Will people lose their jobs?** Based on our initial assessments, we are confident we can find this immediate saving without any impact on our permanent kaimahi numbers. We will look to other avenues before looking to make cost savings from divesting permanent kaimahi.
5. **Where are the savings coming from?** Financial delegations, travel, vehicle use, contractor spend, tighter recruitment decisions and remuneration are the key areas we're looking to make immediate changes. It's so important that we work as a collective to address the changes we need to make together.
6. **Is this a recruitment pause?** We have agreed to a recruitment pause for all roles that are not under active recruitment and will move to a more prioritised approach of recruiting roles only defined as "critical" roles. If you want to know more about what a "critical" role is, please speak with your manager in the first instance.
7. **What does this mean for Tier 4 leaders?** All financial delegations now sit with your Tier 3. Some delegations will be held by ELT only. Any vacancies that are not actively being recruited for will be put on hold.
8. **Is this about lack of trust in kaimahi to spend money wisely?** No. Your ELT has absolute confidence that all kaimahi are here because they believe in the kaupapa. This is simply a measure to ensure we can continue to deliver for whānau over a period of fiscal restraint affecting all of Aotearoa.
9. **Is this a ban on contractors?** There has been further government focus on consultancy and contractor spend. We have significantly reduced our contractor spend in the previous financial year in line with Te Kawa Mataaho/Public Service Commission guidance. Any new contractors or consultants will need to be signed off by two ELT members.
10. **Will this impact on our vision of thriving whānau?** ELT is confident we can continue to deliver for whānau. We have amazing people working on this kaupapa, we will adapt and will do it as a team.

11. **Will there be more cost savings coming?** We are likely to have to adapt in the future, but we will rise to the challenge, and we have been here before.
12. **How will staff be updated about any changes or further savings?** ELT will continue to update all kaimahi via weekly pānui and Manager's Brief, Te Pū Matua and via Directors.

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Story published to Te Pū Matua, the Te Puni Kōkiri intranet on Thursday, 19 October 2023

All-kaimahi hui - a change in government

Dave's korero at yesterday's all-kaimahi hui gave us all a good understanding of the immediate next steps and of possible changes for the Ministry under a new government.

The results from the election are now known, and while counting of the special votes won't be completed until 3 November, it seems clear that we, as a government agency, will be supporting a centre right government made up of the National and Act parties, and possibly NZ First.

Whether a combination of arrangements including formal coalition through to confidence and supply, the final composition of the incoming government will be a result of negotiations between the above-mentioned parties.

Dave reiterated that as one of Aotearoa New Zealand's [oldest](#) government agencies our resilience comes in large part from our ability to stay connected to our purpose of 'building an Aotearoa New Zealand where whānau can all stand, thrive and belong'.

"We have a history of resilience and have proven many times we can successfully adapt to the environment in which we have to operate within."

For the Ministry right now, we are in a holding pattern, under a caretaker government while those negotiations continue. Our Ministers are still our Ministers until a formal transition of power occurs.

Dave expects to meet with the new Minister for Māori Development once they are appointed, to discuss the new government's priorities. He also expects there will be a strong focus on delivery.

The three parties currently negotiating to form a new government mentioned in their pre-election campaigns a keen focus on public sector spending and performance. We can anticipate they will take a close look at the size and capability of agencies, including Te Puni Kōkiri.

"I mentioned earlier that we needed to find 2% savings - \$11 million from our baseline per annum, which we have achieved," says Dave.

A [10-point-plan](#) on cost saving measures focuses primarily on contractors and consultants, recruitment, travel, large hui. However, there is an expectation that the public sector will be asked to find additional savings.

"I anticipate that we, along with the rest of the public sector, will be expected to find a further 6.5-8% additional savings.

"Unfortunately, this is likely to have an impact on staff numbers," says Dave.

However, he and ELT will continue to focus on vacancies and attrition to find the savings required.

Dave expects the new government will focus on delivery, including developing targets that public service agencies will be expected to meet, under a 'value for money' framework.

"I will continue to look at what we are doing and how we are doing it. Our work on the IPP Te Puni Kōkiri work programme provides an opportunity to quickly identify where we can prioritise, and where we can make savings."

Dave encouraged kaimahi that may have any suggestions on how we can save money or contribute to longer term financial sustainability to please pass them up through people leaders, speak directly to your director, or any of the ELT members.

In closing, Dave promised to have further all-kaimahi hui to ensure everyone was kept informed and up to date with progress as best as possible. The next one is likely to be soon after he has met with the new Minister for Māori Development.

"Ideally, I would like to give you firm details now, however, the best I can do is let you know what I know, and where I think we are going.

"These are challenging times, and can bring angst, but with those challenges comes opportunity.

"We are resilient. Stay connected. Together we will endure. Ehara tāku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini," Dave reiterated.

Dave answered a range of pātai from kaimahi right across the motu. Some of them are summarised below:

Is there a change process or plan being discussed?

The first step is to meet with the new Minister and understand the government's priorities.

Will we be cutting services, lift and shift, and how will this impact kaimahi supporting cyclone affected communities?

The Māori Development [Act](#) 1991 gives Te Puni Kōkiri a clear mandate, and a Cabinet [Directive](#) issued in 2019 repositions Te Puni Kōkiri for strategic impact, with seven key focus areas. These two documents create a solid foundation for our legislated roles and responsibilities. However, there is no new money so we may be expected to deliver the same with less or deliver things differently. Regarding cyclone affected communities, I would think any government would continue to support recovery efforts.

How can kaimahi support ELT?

We all know our purpose and vision, and we all want to be here to achieve our priorities. We are here to serve the government of the day so if we are asked to shift focus then that is what we will do. That may mean letting go of some old projects. We need to be prepared to shift.

Note

Remember, Te Puni Kōkiri have a free and confidential Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) available for all kaimahi and their whanau. You can reach out to them by contacting Habit Health on 0800 327 669 or via their website www.eapservices.co.nz. PSA members can seek information and support from the [PSA](#) as well. Their inbox is: psa@tpk.govt.nz