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8 August 2025

Ref: OIAD--5261

Tēnā koe 

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation, received on 26 May 2025, in which you asked:

“Under the OIA, can I please have copies of all aide memoirs, briefings, memos, notes, reports, or any other advice, sent to the Minister or their offices regarding funding decisions for your department/ministry and votes you are responsible for, in the context of Budget 2025. This includes all Budget 2025 bids for funding, impacts of funding decisions in Budget 25, and impacts of not receiving funding in Budget 2025. This can be limited to 1 November 2024 to today.

Under the OIA, I also request copies of all aide memoirs, briefings, memos, notes, reports, or any other advice, sent to your executive leadership team regarding funding decisions for departments and votes you are responsible for, in the context of Budget 2025. This includes all Budget 2025 bids for funding, impacts of funding decisions in Budget 25, and impacts of not receiving funding in Budget 2025. This can be limited to 1 November 2024 to today.

If and where a document that falls under scope of this request cannot be released, please supply a summary of that document's contents.

If and where any document falls under the scope of this request, please release it in full, including sections which might otherwise be considered out of scope”

We have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

On 16 June 2025, we extended the timeframe to respond to your request to 8 August 2025, due to the large quantity of information sought and the consultation necessary.

The Department's response to this OIA request includes all advice provided to the Minister of Conservation and his Office, and the Senior Leadership Team - including draft package options and final templates for submission. It is limited to the period 1 November 2024 to 26 May 2025.

Final Budget decisions for the Department have been made and can be found [here](#).

I have decided to release the documents listed in the attached Schedule of documents, subject to information being withheld under one or more of the following sections of the OIA, as applicable:

- personal information, under section 9(2)(a) – to protect the privacy of natural persons, including deceased people,
- commercially sensitive information, under section 9(2)(b)(ii) – to protect the commercial position of the person who supplied the information, or who is the subject of the information,
- advice (still) under consideration, section 9(2)(f)(iv) – to maintain the current constitutional conventions protecting the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers and officials,
- free and frank expression of opinions, under section 9(2)(g)(i) – by, between or to Ministers or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any public service agency or organisation in the course of their duty to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs,
- advice subject to legal privilege, under section 9(2)(h) - to maintain legal professional privilege,
- commercially sensitive information, under section 9(2)(i) - to enable a Minister or any public service agency or organisation holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities, and
- confidential information, under section 9(2)(j) – to enable a Minister or any public service agency or organisation holding the information to negotiate without disadvantage or prejudice.

The attached Schedule of documents incorporates a brief summary of content for each document, as requested.

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the OIA and determined there are no public interests that outweigh the grounds for withholding.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) and the attached documents may be published on the Department's website.

Nāku noa, nā



Sam Thomas
Director Policy
Department of Conservation | *Te Papa Atawhai*

Schedule of documents

Item	Date	Document description	Decision
1	6/12/2024	Briefing: 24-B-0611 – Scope of Budget 2025 submissions Provided advice on the scope of the Department of Conservation's (DOC) grants and funds submission and identified low and high savings options.	Released in full.
2		Attachment A: Detailed assessment of all funding arrangements currently in scope for the 'Grants and Funds' submission Provided a detailed assessment and analysis of the value for money of all funding arrangements currently in scope for DOC's grants and funds submission.	Released in part.
3		Attachment B: Draft letter to the Minister of Finance Proposed formal response to the Minister of Finance's Budget invitation.	Released in part.
4		Attachment C: Summary of impacts by funding package Provides a summary of draft savings options.	Released in part.
5	13/12/2024	Email: Subject: Budget 2025 Package Sent the Budget 2025 briefing package to the Minister of Conservation's Office (MOCO) and provided a summary of the Briefing and each attachment.	Released in part.
6	13/12/2024	Briefing: 24-B-0603 – Budget 2025 submission Provided context on Budget 2025 and the implications and risk associated with the funding packages.	Released in part.
7		Attachment A: Draft letter to Minister of Finance on Budget 2025 Proposed formal response to the Minister of Finance's Budget invitation.	Released in part.
8		Attachment B: Budget 2025 submission template – water infrastructure Completed Budget template from a review of the tagged contingency for the Conservation Water Infrastructure Programme.	Released in part.
9		Attachment C: Budget 2025 submission templates – grants and funds Draft Budget templates for DOC's four contestable funds (being one of the options DOC considered submitting).	Released in part.

10		<p>Attachment D: <i>Budget 2025 submission template – grants and funds, summary of high and low options</i> One of the Budget templates, summarising the impact of high versus low saving options for grants and funds.</p>	Released in full.
11	17/12/2024	<p>Briefing: 24-B-0634 – Budget 2025 submission approval Sought Minister of Conservation's (Minister) agreement on which grants and funds to submit as savings to the Budget process.</p>	Released in part.
12		<p>Attachment A: <i>Draft letter to Minister of Finance on Budget 2025</i> Proposed response to the Minister of Finance's letter that outlined Budget 2025 drinking water savings and grants and funds savings options.</p>	Released in part.
13		<p>Attachment B: <i>Budget 2025 submission template – water infrastructure</i> Completed Budget template for the Conservation Drinking Water Infrastructure Initiative for the Tagged Contingency Review.</p>	Released in part.
14		<p>Attachment C: <i>Budget 2025 submission templates – grants and funds</i> Included eight completed Budget templates for draft grants and funds savings initiatives.</p>	Released in part.
15		<p>Attachment D: <i>Budget 2025 submission template – grants and funds, summary of high and low options</i> Detailed overview of the high and low saving options.</p>	Released in part.
16	27/01/2025	<p>Memo: 25-B-0012 – Meeting with Minister Seymour Provided material to support the Minister for his meeting with Minister Seymour on the Budget 2025 Baseline Savings Programme (BSP).</p>	Released in part.
17		<p>Attachment A: <i>Talking points: Potential further savings from Vote Conservation</i> Talking points to support the Minister for his meeting with Minister Seymour on the Budget 2025 BSP.</p>	Released in part.
18		<p>Attachment B: <i>Overview of Budget funding since 2017</i> Detailed overview of all Budget funding since 2017 and an assessment of risks and implications of reducing funding.</p>	Released in part.
19		<p>Attachment C: <i>Investment A3s</i> Covered the functions, key outcomes, funding breakdown, and challenges for DOC's main investment areas.</p>	Released in full.

20		<i>Attachment D:</i> <i>DOC's Performance Plan</i> Outlines how DOC will manage cost pressures going forward.	Released in part.
21	31/01/2025	Briefing: 25-B-0028 – Budget 2025 additional information for baseline savings programme Sought Minister's agreement to send the attached material to Minister Seymour.	Released in part.
22		<i>Attachment A:</i> <i>DOC funding since 2017</i> Outlines the growth of DOC funding and investment since 2017 (different from the previous briefing).	Released in part.
23		<i>Attachment B:</i> <i>Vote Conservation current breakdown</i> Outlines DOC's current operating baseline and investments.	Released in part.
24	19/02/2025	Briefing: 25-B-0052 – Baseline Savings Programme – proposed approach Sought Minister's agreement to respond to Minister Seymour's questions, submit a savings package, and reply to his Budget invitation.	Released in part.
25		<i>Attachment A:</i> <i>Draft letter to Minister Seymour</i> Proposed formal response to Minister Seymour's BSP.	Released in part.
26		<i>Attachment B:</i> <i>Response to Minister Seymour's questions</i> Provides responses to Minister's Seymour's specific questions regarding the areas of DOC's baseline identified for savings initiatives (66% of DOC's baseline captured). Also includes the impacts of further savings in the identified areas.	Released in part.
27		<i>Attachment C:</i> <i>Summary of savings initiatives</i> Provides analysis on the three recommended savings initiatives.	Released in part.
28		<i>Letter:</i> <i>Letter from Hon Min Seymour</i> Asked DOC to return to 2016/17 levels of funding, as part of the BSP.	Released in part.
29	16/03/2025	Briefing: 25-B-0094 – Draft letter to Hon Min Seymour – Budget 2025 Sought Minister's agreement to send proposed letter in response to Minister Seymour's further savings request.	Released in part.

30		<p>Attachment A: Draft letter to Minister Seymour Responds to Minister Seymour's letter encouraging the Minister to find more savings in DOC's baseline.</p>	Released in part.
31	04/03/2025	<p>Email: Subject: Waste Levy – Budget 2025 – Joint Minister decisions Provided DOC's advice on the Ministry for the Environment briefing on waste levy allocation decisions and the baseline swap.</p>	Released in part.
32	02/12/2024	<p>Talking Points: Budget 25: Talking points for DG with MOC on 3 December Talking points intended to support the Director General in a meeting with the Minister to discuss the full Budget 2025 package in December 2024.</p>	Released in part.
33	03/12/2024	<p>Email: Subject: RE: Budget 25 Subs: SLT calls & next steps re Grants & Funds Provided early advice to the senior leadership team (SLT) on grants and funds options for Budget 2025 in December 2024.</p>	Released in part.
34	26/11/2024	<p>SLT Weekly meeting slide pack: Approach to DOC Submissions for Budget 25 Provided early advice (November 2024) to DOC's SLT on grants and funds options to submit for Budget 2025. Also provided advice on the Molesworth Great Walk initiative.</p>	Released in part.
35	03/12/2024	<p>SLT Weekly meeting slide pack: Update on DOC Submissions for Budget 25 Provided updated advice to the SLT on grants and funds options for Budget 2025.</p>	Released in part.
36	04/12/2024	<p>Email: Subject: Budget 2025 briefing pack for Mon 9 Dec MOC meeting Brief overview of the below attachments concerning the grants and funds in scope for Budget 2025.</p>	Released in part.
37	05/12/2024	<p>Briefing: 24-B-0611 – Scope of Budget 2025 submissions - DRAFT Provided SLT (draft) initial advice on Budget 2025 submissions and a draft letter to the Minister of Finance.</p>	Released in full.
38		<p>Attachment A: Assessment of all funding arrangements currently in scope for the 'Grants and Funds' submission - DRAFT Provided a detailed assessment of all funding arrangements for DOC's grants and funds submission.</p>	Released in part.

39		<i>Attachment B:</i> <i>Draft letter to the Minister of Finance - DRAFT</i> Proposed letter to the Minister of Finance on DOC's savings submission.	Withhold in full.
40		<i>Attachment C:</i> <i>Approach to Budget 2025 submission on 'Grants & Funds' - DRAFT</i> Provided advice on 'Plan A' and 'Plan B' packages.	Released in part.
41	14/04/2025	Comms Advice: Budget 2025 – Vote Conservation: Key messages and Q&A Outlines advice on key messages and Q&A for Budget 2025.	Released in full.
42		<i>Comms Advice:</i> <i>Department of Conservation Budget 2025 overview</i> Overview of Budget 2025 savings.	Released in full.
43		<i>Comms Advice:</i> <i>Budget 2025 outcome – key numbers</i> Outlines key numbers in relation to DOC savings for Budget 2025.	Released in full.
44		<i>Comms Advice:</i> <i>Minister's Budget Pack Comms – PF2050 Ltd</i> Advice on key messages for PF2050 Ltd savings.	Released in full.
45	28/01/2025	Briefing: 25-B-0001 – IVL funding package for 2025/26 Sought approval for the proposed \$55m IVL conservation investment package for 2025/26.	Released in part.
46		<i>Attachment A:</i> <i>Proposed 2025/26 IVL conservation investment programme</i> Outlines the proposed \$55m IVL conservation investment package for 2025/26.	Released in full.
47		<i>Attachment B:</i> <i>2024/25 funded projects (for reference)</i> Outlines IVL projects funded in 2024/25.	Released in full.
48	07/02/2025	Memo: 25-M-0008 – International Visitor Levy Ministers Meeting – 10 February 2025 Provided material to support a meeting with Ministers Willis and Upston on the IVL.	Released in part.
49		<i>Attachment A:</i> <i>Talking points</i> Talking points to support meeting with IVL Ministers.	Released in full.

50	20/02/2025	Briefing: 25-B-0057 – Proposed International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy (IVL) investment plans for 2025/26 Sought final feedback and agreement to the IVL investment plans for 2025/26, alongside Minister Upston.	Released in part.
51		Annex One: Proposed Tourism IVL Investment Plan for 2025/26 Outlines the proposed IVL tourism investment package for 2025/26.	Released in part.
52		Annex Two: Proposed Conservation IVL Investment Plan for 2025/26 Outlines the proposed IVL Conservation investment package for 2025/26.	Released in full.
53	13/03/2025	Briefing: 25-B-0074 – Final International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy (IVL) investment plans for 2025/26 Provided the final IVL Tourism and Conservation investment plans for 2025/26.	Released in part.
54		Annex One: Tourism IVL Investment Plan for 2025/26 This attachment outlines the final IVL Tourism investment package for 2025/26.	Released in part.
55		Annex Two: Conservation IVL Investment Plan for 2025/26 Outlines the final IVL Conservation investment package for 2025/26.	Released in full.
56	17/03/2025	Briefing: 25-B-0105 – IVL funding shortfall Sought the Minister's direction and provided advice on addressing the \$32 million IVL funding shortfall.	Released in part.
57		Attachment A: Draft letter to Minister of Finance Proposed letter to the Minister of Finance requesting \$32 million in funding through the Budget process.	Released in part.