

Reference: 20160114



28 April 2016

Michael Reddell
mhreddell@gmail.com

Dear Michael Reddell

Thank you for your Official Information Act request, received by the Treasury on 18 April 2016. You requested:

“Information on the nature of the security precautions taken at lock-ups organized by the Treasury, including those for the Budget and HYEUFU, and whether any reviews have been undertaken, or changes made, following the OCR leak and the Deloitte report released earlier this week.”

The Treasury’s Budget Lock Up Process

The Treasury holds embargoed briefings for the release of documents relating to the Budget, Economic and Fiscal Updates, and the Financial Statements of the Government. All briefings held by the Treasury involve a formal registration process, where attendees are required to submit a registration to attend. In doing so they agree to abide by the embargo conditions. The consequences of breaching embargo provisions are made clear in the terms and conditions of their registration (i.e. the individual and organisation may be refused from future lock-ups).

In terms of security precautions taken at the lock-up itself, attendees will be refused entry unless they have registered prior. Once documents have been distributed at the lock-up, attendees are not permitted to leave the venue until the embargo has been lifted. Attendees are not required to surrender their phones or mobile devices upon entering the lock-up, but devices must not be used to receive or transmit any voice, text, images or data from within the lock-up. Compliance is monitored throughout the lock-up period.

The Treasury has not undertaken a formal review following the OCR breach and consequent Deloitte report, however internal discussions were held to consider the implications for the Treasury in light of these events. Secretary to the Treasury Gabriel Makhoulouf made the decision to continue with plans to hold the Budget 2016 lock-up, and has informed media organisations of this decision, noting that continuing embargoed briefings in future depends on attendees’ adherence to the embargo conditions.

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Information Being Released

Please find enclosed the following document:

Item	Date	Document Description	Decision
1.	21 April 2016	Letter to CE's Budget lock ups (master)	Release in full

I have decided to release in full the document listed above.

Information Publicly Available

The following information is also covered by your request and is publicly available on the Treasury website:

Item	Date	Document Description	Website Address
2.	23 November 2015	Half Year Economic and Fiscal Update Media Lock-Up	http://www.treasury.govt.nz/budget/forecasts/2015hyefu-lockup
3.	19 July 2014	Registrations open to attend Pre-election Economic and Fiscal Update lock-up	http://www.treasury.govt.nz/budget/forecasts/prefulockup
4.	31 March 2016	Budget 2016 Embargoed Briefing	http://www.treasury.govt.nz/budget/2016/lock-up

Accordingly, I have declined your request for the documents listed in the above table under section 18(d) of the Official Information Act – the information requested is or will soon be publicly available.

This fully covers the information you requested. You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision.

Yours sincerely



Simon McLoughlin
Team Leader, Fiscal & State Sector Management

21 April 2016

Name
Position
Email:

Embargoed briefings for the Budget

I am writing to media outlets to clarify the Treasury's position with respect to media lock-ups ahead of Budget 2016 announcements.

Media briefings play an important role in enabling open and transparent government, so that the public can receive timely and accurate information about the Budget. However we also expect adherence to the embargo rules and place a high degree of trust in the media personnel attending lock-ups. I have taken stock of our position following the recent release of information in breach of the lock-up rules at the Reserve Bank.

On balance I have decided that an embargoed briefing for Budget 2016 will be held as planned. However I will continue to review both the overall status of future Budget briefings, and the ability of organisations to attend, in light of the adherence to lock-up conditions.

As Chief Executive you are ultimately responsible for the actions of your staff. I encourage you in advance of the Budget 2016 lock-up to take appropriate steps to remind them of their obligation to adhere to the rules, in particular that no information may be transmitted or released from the lock-up until after the embargo is lifted. (The rules/conditions of attending the Budget 2016 lock-up are available here: <http://www.treasury.govt.nz/budget/2016/lock-up>.)

Media play an important role in keeping the New Zealand public well-informed and media lock-ups are a key enabler contributing to that. I trust you can see the value in providing regular reminders to your staff on the importance of embargo conditions, to help ensure this mutually beneficial practice can continue.

Gabriel Makhlouf