

Secretary and Chief Executive Expense Disclosures: A Guide for Agency Staff

[The following is a summary from "Public Service Secretaries and Chief Executive Expense Disclosures: A Guide for Agency Staff"](#)
[Please read that in full first.](#)

In the following worksheets, cells shaded light green require input. All other cells are locked to prevent change.

Purpose

The purpose of regular public disclosure of secretaries and/or chief executive's expenses is to provide transparency and accountability for discretionary expenditure by Public Service agencies and statutory Crown entities. Publishing clear and detailed disclosures is integral to building and maintaining the public's trust and confidence in the Public service.

What is covered?

All expenses for items offered, accepted or declined by secretaries or chief executives in performing their role are required to be disclosed, whether paid by credit card or invoiced. This includes expenses for more personal undertakings, such as professional development expenditure, in addition to outgoings for the likes of travel and entertainment. Secretary and chief executive expenses are not generally regarded as personal or commercially sensitive. Refer to the Ombudsman Guide to Chief Executive Expenses for guidance. Business or corporate expenses for the organisation that are met from the secretaries or chief executive's budget or paid by their credit card are excluded. Expense disclosures cover the full period of the report, and are completed by each secretary or chief executive, including in Acting roles - Complete a separate workbook for each.

How does it work?

Secretaries or chief executives disclose the expenses, gifts & hospitality they have expended or been offered using this Excel workbook. Secretaries or chief executives formally approve completed Excel workbooks and an appropriate person reviews them (see guidance). They are posted on agency websites and linked to [www.data.govt.nz](https://www.data.govt.nz/toolkit/how-do-i-add-or-update-our-chief-executive-expenses/). See: <https://www.data.govt.nz/toolkit/how-do-i-add-or-update-our-chief-executive-expenses/>

When and how often are disclosures made?

Disclosures cover the year to 30 June and are expected to be published by 31 July.

Disclosed Information - this workbook includes a tab for each of the following categories:

Summary and sign-off

This tab contains a summary of the information presented: it includes a single place to update entity information, running totals of the different types of expenses and gifts/benefits, and records the required checks and sign-offs before publication.

Travel

All expenses incurred by secretaries or chief executives during international, national and local travel are disclosed. Expenditure relating to each trip is grouped (particularly for overseas trips), but the nature of the items of expenditure are disclosed separately, with individual lines for the likes of airfares, accommodation, meals, and taxis.

Hospitality

All work-related hospitality expenses provided by the secretary or chief executive to people external to Public Service agencies and statutory Crown entities.

All other expenses

All other expenses incurred by the secretary or chief executive that are not captured under the definition of travel, hospitality or gifts and benefits are disclosed in this section. This includes items such as cell phone and data costs, subscriptions, membership fees, conference fees, and professional development fees.

If in doubt, the principles of transparency and accountability apply and therefore all items are disclosed, unless there is a very good reason not to. The Ombudsman's view is that "because this expenditure is incurred by very senior employees acting in an official capacity and for a business purpose, the privacy interests of the chief executives who incurred the expenditure are low".

Gifts and benefits

All gifts, invitations to events and other hospitality, of \$50 or more in total value per year, offered, accepted or declined by the secretary or chief executive from people external to Public Service agencies and statutory Crown entities are disclosed. A brief explanation of what the secretary or chief executive did with the gifts and benefits is supplied, which includes whether the offer was declined.

Usually gifts and benefits that have more than a token value are also declared on an open register within agencies, as well as on the expenses disclosure. Please note that anything offered is official information and is covered by the Official Information Act.

The value of each gift or benefit should be provided/estimated where possible. If an estimate is approximate, valuation 'ranges' can be submitted. It should be recorded where the cost of a gift cannot be reasonably estimated, or where an estimate is inappropriate (e.g. because of the nature of the item or because disclosing an estimated value might cause offence such as a cultural gift).

How to present information

[Provide information using this Excel workbook: https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/resources/ce-expenses-disclosure/](https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/resources/ce-expenses-disclosure/)

Complete separate tables for each category using the tabs provided in this Excel workbook: Travel, Hospitality, Gifts and Benefits, All other expenses.

Complete all fields. The header (organisation name, secretary or chief executive name and reporting period) will pre-populate once you enter it on the 'Summary and sign-off' tab.

Whether costs are GST exclusive or inclusive needs to be consistent on each sheet, and ideally should be consistent across all sheets. You have the option to use GST exclusive or inclusive as it may depend how you get your source information.

Mark clearly if no information to disclose - where there is no information to disclose, record this clearly on the spreadsheet with a suitable description such as “no travel expenses to disclose for this period”; “no gifts received” or “no hospitality provided”. Please do not leave the page blank.

Ensure the disclosure is for the full reporting period. Include separate disclosures for each secretary or chief executive, including those in Acting roles.

Provide sufficient detail for each item in the spreadsheet. Agencies are encouraged to take a why, what, who, where and how approach to describing individual items. A good description that outlines the nature of the item and its purpose improves understanding of why expenses have been incurred or why gifts and hospitality have been given or received.

Provide full information for every entry. The alert "Some records may be incomplete" will show in the 'Total' line if any expense has 'Cost' or 'Type of expense' missing, or, any gift has 'Accepted/Declined', 'Description' or 'Estimated value' missing.

The subtotals and totals should appear and update automatically, once you add information to the rows above. Insert more rows as you need - right click on the row number (at the left of screen) and select 'Insert' - new row will insert above.

Uploading the workbook - please ensure it is easy to find on your website.

The Disclosures webpage could be headed with a statement such as: (this agency) is disclosing the Secretary or Chief Executive's expenses, gifts and hospitality as part of its commitment to transparency and accountability."

Further assistance

The above is a summary from "Secretary or Chief Executive Expense Disclosures: A Guide for Agency Staff": <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/Legacy/resources/Chief-Executive-Expense-Disclosure-Guide.pdf>
Please read that in full first.

If you have any questions please contact ceexpenses@publicservice.govt.nz

For help with publishing on data.govt contact info@data.govt.nz.

Expenses should be posted on agency websites and linked to www.data.govt.nz. See: <https://www.data.govt.nz/toolkit/how-do-i-add-or-update-our-chief-executive-expenses/>

[Provide information using the Commissions Excel workbook - Click Here](#)

Secretary or Chief Executive Expenses, Gifts and Benefits Disclosure - summary & sign-off*

Organisation Name*	Ministry for Ethnic Communities
Secretary or Chief Executive**	Mervin Singham
Disclosure period start****	1 July 2024
Disclosure period end***	30 June 2025
Agency totals check	Data and totals have not yet been checked and confirmed for any sheet
Secretary or Chief Executive approval****	This disclosure has not yet been approved by the Departmental Secretary or Chief Executive
Other sign-off*****	Type here who else has approved this disclosure

This summary page updates automatically from the 'Travel', 'Hospitality', 'All other expenses', and 'Gifts and benefits' tabs.

Throughout this workbook, input cells are shaded light green.

Summary of expenses	Cost in NZ\$	GST Inc		Gifts and benefits	Count
Travel expenses	\$9,818.69	Not yet indicated		Number offered	3
Hospitality	\$0.00	Not yet indicated		Number accepted	2
Other expenses	\$1,383.88	Not yet indicated		Number declined	1
International Travel	\$0.00	Not yet indicated			
Domestic Travel	\$9,677.94	Not yet indicated			
Local Travel	\$140.75	Not yet indicated			
Notes					
* Headings on following tabs will pre populate with what you enter on this tab					
** Create a new workbook for a new or Acting Departmental secretary or Chief Executive					
*** Update if a shorter or different period is covered					
**** This disclosure must be approved by the Departmental secretary or Chief Executive and another appropriate party, e.g. Board Chair, Chief Financial Officer or Audit and Risk Officer					

Public Service Secretary or Chief Executive Expense Disclosure	
Organisation Name	Ministry for Ethnic Communities
Public Service Secretary or Chief Executive	Mervin Singham
Disclosure period start	1 July 2024
Disclosure period end	30 June 2025
GST on costs	
Agency totals check	

International, domestic and local travel expenses

All expenses incurred by Public Service secretary or chief executive during international, domestic and local travel. Group expenses relating to each trip.

International Travel (including travel within NZ at beginning and end of overseas trip)				
Date(s)*	Cost in NZ\$**	Purpose of travel (e.g. attending XYZ conference for 3 days)***	Type of expense (e.g. hotel, airfares, taxis, meals & for how many people)	Location(s)
		No overseas travel		
Subtotal - international travel	\$0.00	Check - there are no hidden rows with data		Check - each entry provides sufficient information

Domestic Travel (within NZ, including travel to and from local airport)				
Date(s)*	Cost in NZ\$	Purpose of travel (e.g. visiting district office for two days...)***	Type of expense (e.g. hotel, airfares, taxis, meals & for how many people)	Location(s)
18 July 2024	\$1,051.71	Christchurch Roadshow & 4th Annual Chch Multicultural Festival 20/7	Flights, taxi, accommodation and meal	
25 July 2024	\$849.04	Auckland Roadshow	Flights, taxi, accommodation and meal for 1 person	
8 August 2024	\$873.18	Astor Foundation Seminar	Flights, taxi, accommodation and meal for 1 person	
13 August 2024	\$1,155.69	Meeting with Business Symposium stakeholders	Flights, taxi, accommodation and meal for 1 person	
9 October 2024	\$825.35	Ethnic Xchange Symposium	Flights, taxi, accommodation and meal for 1 person	
25 November 2024	\$849.82	Stakeholder Engagements	Flights, taxi, accommodation and meal for 1 person	
5 February 2025	\$862.88	SESI staff	Flights, taxi, accommodation and meal for 1 person	
15 March 2025	\$1,003.29	15th March Unity Hui	Flights, taxi, accommodation and meal for 1 person	
25 March 2025	\$838.94	Stakeholders Meetings	Flights, taxi, accommodation and meal for 1 person	
11 June 2025	\$1,005.73	Auckland Roadshow and Grand Eid Al Ghandeer Celebration 2025	Flights, taxi, accommodation and meal for 1 person	
27 June 2025	\$362.31	Ethnic Advantage Conference	Flights, taxi, accommodation and meal for 1 person	
Subtotal - domestic travel	\$9,677.94	Check - there are no hidden rows with data		Check - each entry provides sufficient information

Local Travel (within City, excluding travel to airport)				
Date(s)*	Cost in NZ\$	Purpose of travel (e.g. meeting with Minister)***	Type of expense (e.g. taxi, parking, bus)	Location(s)
18 September 2024	\$52.00	Reception of 67th National Day, Malaysia Day and Armed Forces Day	Taxi	Khandallah

4 November 2024	\$26.20	Diwali Event	Taxi	CBD
22 May 2025	\$20.90	Muslim Leaders Programme Closing Ceremony	Taxi	Kilbirnie
24 May 2025	\$28.80	Vesak Day Event	Taxi	Newlands
4 June 2025	\$12.85	CBD to Away Day Venue	Taxi	Wellington
Subtotal - local travel		\$140.75	Check - there are no hidden rows with data	
Total travel expenses		\$9,818.69	Check - each entry provides sufficient information	

Notes

* Any non-standard date format or date outside 1 July - 30 June will raise an alert. Check entry and select 'Yes' to accept/continue.

** Note that GST may not apply to overseas purchases.

*** Please include sufficient information to explain the trip and its costs including destination and duration.

Insert additional rows as needed: right click on a row number (left of screen) and select Insert - this will insert a row above selected row.

Group expenditure relating to each overseas trip.

Subtotals and totals will appear automatically once you put information in rows above.

Mark clearly if there is no information to disclose - provide a note to this effect in the 'Date' column (column A) for each travel category (local, domestic and international).

Public Service Secretary or Chief Executive Expense Disclosure				
Organisation Name	Ministry for Ethnic Communities			
Public Service Secretary or Chief Executive	Mervin Singham			
Disclosure period start	1 July 2024			
Disclosure period end	30 June 2025			
GST on costs				
Agency totals check				
Hospitality Offered to Third Parties*				
All hospitality expenses provided by the Public Service secretary or chief executive in the context of their job to anyone external to the Public Service or statutory Crown entities.				
Date(s)**	Cost in NZ\$	Purpose of hospitality (e.g. hosting delegation from China, building relationships, team building)	Type of expense (what and for how many e.g. dinner for 5)	Location(s)
		No information to disclose		
Total hospitality expenses	\$0.00	Check - there are no hidden rows with data	Check - each entry provides sufficient information	
Notes				
* Third parties include people and organisations external to the public service or statutory Crown entities.				
** Any non-standard date format or date outside 1 July - 30 June will raise an alert. Check entry and select 'Yes' to accept/continue.				
Insert additional rows as needed: right click on a row number (left of screen) and select Insert - this will insert a row above selected row.				
Total cost will appear automatically once you put information in rows above.				
Mark clearly if there is no information to disclose - provide a note to this effect in the 'Date' column (column A).				

Public Service Secretary or Chief Executive Expense Disclosure				
Organisation Name	Ministry for Ethnic Communities			
Public Service secretary or Chief Executive	Mervin Singham			
Disclosure period start	1 July 2024			
Disclosure period end	30 June 2025			
GST on costs				
Agency totals check				
All Other Expenses				
<p><i>All other expenditure incurred by the Public Service secretary or chief executive that is not travel, hospitality or gifts.</i> <i>Include e.g. phone and data costs, subscriptions, membership fees, conference fees, professional development costs, books and anything else.</i></p>				
Date(s)*	Cost in NZ\$	Purpose of expense (e.g. subscription part of employment agreement, development as agreed with PSC)	Type of expense (e.g. phone and data costs, membership fees)	Location(s)
	\$358.55	Harvard Business Review annual subscription (estimated)	Annual subscription	Wellington
	\$599.13	Koru Club membership	Annual membership fees	Wellington
	\$426.20	Phone and laptop	Annual phone and data costs	Wellington
Total other expenses	\$1,383.88	Check - there are no hidden rows with data	Check - each entry provides sufficient information	
Notes				
* Any non-standard date format or date outside 1 July - 30 June will raise an alert. Check entry and select 'Yes' to accept/continue.				
Insert additional rows as needed: right click on a row number (left of screen) and select Insert - this will insert a row above selected row.				
Total cost will appear automatically once you put information in rows above.				
Mark clearly if there is no information to disclose - provide a note to this effect in the 'Date' column (column A).				

Public Service Secretary or Chief Executive Gifts and Benefits Disclosure					
Organisation Name	Ministry for Ethnic Communities				
Public Service Secretary or Chief Executive	Mervin Singham				
Disclosure period start	1 July 2024				
Disclosure period end	30 June 2025				
GST on values					
Agency totals check					
Gifts and Benefits over \$50 annual value					
<i>Include all gifts, invitations to events and other hospitality, of \$50 or more in total value per year, offered to the Public Service secretary or chief executive by people external to the Public Service. Include all gifts, invitations or other hospitality whether accepted or declined.</i>					
Date(s)*	Description (e.g. event tickets, etc.)	Was the gift accepted? (drop-down list in cell)	Offered by (who made the offer?)	Estimated value in NZ\$ (drop-down list in cell but provide specific value if possible)	Other comments (e.g. if given to others, whom?)
2 October 2024	Show Me Shorts Film Festival	Accepted	Humanitix	Under \$100	Offered to MEC staff
1 December 2024	Bottle of Wine	Accepted	Singapore High Commission	Under \$100	Offered to Wellington staff EOY function
23 April 2025	Wellington Phoenix's annual Football for All Launch	Declined	Wellington Phoenix	Under \$100	Declined
Total count of gift/benefit entries:	Offered	3	Check - there are no hidden rows with data	Check - each entry provides sufficient information	
	Accepted	2			
	Declined	1			
Notes					
* Any non-standard date format or date outside 1 July - 30 June will raise an alert. Check entry and select 'Yes' to accept/continue.					
Insert additional rows as needed: right click on a row number (left of screen) and select Insert - this will insert a row above selected row.					
A one-off offer of something worth \$25 is not included, but if the offer is made more than once a year, it should be disclosed.					
Include items such as invitations to functions and events, event tickets, gifts from overseas counterparts and commercial organisations (including that accepted by immediate family members).					
Include gifts and benefits that are declined.					
Number of gifts/benefits will update automatically once you put information in rows above.					
Mark clearly if there is no information to disclose - provide a note to this effect in the 'Date' column (column A).					