



30/08/23

Ref: DOIA 2324-0226

Oliver Bryan  
Investigations Co-ordinator  
New Zealand Taxpayers' Union  
Email: [oliver@taxpayers.org.nz](mailto:oliver@taxpayers.org.nz).

Dear Oliver

Thank you for your email of 31 July 2023 where you requested information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). You requested the following information:

- *There are two instances of 'GEIDELBERG DMITRI/MR16/04/23' involving international travel from Wellington to Colorado. Please indicate if this is a return ticket or two people and how much the total travel cost was. Please also outline what the dates of travel were. Also, what event was this travel for?*
- *In addition to the plane tickets, what was the cost of taxis, accommodation (Airbnb), and event registration for this trip.*
- *Also, what was the purpose of the NZSA's attendance at this event? And what events did the NZSA delegate(s) attend or host, and any associated costs?*
- *Please explain what the 'Reimbursement of costs' for \$8,156 is. To what does it refer, what service was offered?*
- *To what does the Domestic Travel cost 'FCM March Consolidation jnl accrual' for \$2,912.95 refer?*
- *And finally, the 'Space Symposium Dinner x3'. Is this referring to three separate dinners or a dinner bought for three people? If the latter, who were the people at the dinner and what was the overall cost?*

The information within the scope of your request has been attached to this letter. No information has been withheld or redacted.

I trust you find the information helpful. 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

**Andrew Johnson**  
Manager, Space Policy, and Sector Development  
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

## Attachment: Responses to requested information

*There are two instances of 'GEIDELBERG DMITRI/MR16/04/23' involving international travel from Wellington to Colorado. Please indicate if this is a return ticket or two people and how much the total travel cost was.*

**Response:** 'GEIDELBERG DMITRI/MR16/04/23' refers to return flights for one person: Dimitri Geidelberg, Policy Team Leader, Space Policy & Sector Development. Air Fares were NZD\$11,302.39 and there was an additional \$125.00 travel agency fee to make an international booking.

*Please outline what the dates of travel were.*

**Response:** 16–20 April 2023.

*What event was this travel for?*

**Response:** MBIE delegates travelled to attend the annual Space Symposium held in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

*In addition to the plane tickets, what was the cost of taxis, accommodation (air bnb), and event registration for this trip.*

**Response:** The table below includes costs for Dimitri Geidelberg as well as costs for two other MBIE staff. The two other staff members' costs were not captured by your previous information request as their costs were met outside the 'New Zealand Space Agency cost codes'. As per my letter of 31 July, 'New Zealand Space Agency cost codes' was interpreted as the costs codes covering MBIE's Space Policy & Sector Development team and the Space Regulatory Systems team. Please see the break downs for the cost information requested for the three delegates who attended the conference as follows:

Cost for three staff	NZD
Flights	25,423.19
Registration fees for Space Symposium	6,825.58
Accommodation (Air BnB)	2,896.05
Road transport (Uber, taxis etc)	686.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,831.15</b>

*Also, what was the purpose of the NZSA's attendance at this event?*

**Response:** The Space Symposium is one of the largest annual international space conferences with a heavy government focus. MBIE attended primarily to efficiently attend multiple face-to-face bilateral meetings with overseas government officials, companies, and research entities in one place and secondarily to support New Zealand entities meeting the same.

*And what events did the NZSA delegate(s) attend or host, and any associated costs?*

**Response:** The MBIE delegates had meetings with officials and executives from the organisations listed below:

- NASA Headquarters and Science Mission Directorate
- NASA Launch Services for Space Operations Directorate
- NASA Ames Research Center
- NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory
- NASA Goddard Flight Center
- US Federal Aviation Administration
- US Federal Communications Commission
- US State Department
- US Department of Commerce
- US Department of the Air Force
- US National Reconnaissance Office
- Aerospace Corporation
- Australian Space Agency,
- United Kingdom Space Agency,
- DLR - German Aerospace Center
- German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK)
- Centre national d'études spatiale (CNES) – French Space Agency
- Canadian Space Agency
- European Space Agency
- European Union Agency for the Space Programme
- Rocket Lab Ltd
- LeoLabs Ltd
- Axiom Ltd
- Astroscale Ltd
- Space Economy Rising

MBIE officials did not host any events at the symposium, but New Zealand Trade and Enterprise hosted an event where a NZSA banner was displayed. An MBIE staff member did deliver a speech at this event but there were no costs directly associated to MBIE from attending. MBIE staff were present to facilitate engagements between New Zealand and international stakeholders and the association with the 'New Zealand Space Agency' brand was intended to encourage attendance from overseas counterparts.

*Please explain what the 'Reimbursement of costs' for \$8,156 is. To what does it refer, what service was offered?*

**Response:** The reimbursement of costs is not related to the Space Symposium conference. These costs relate to the reimbursement of operational costs to Auckland University of Technology for transitional arrangements for continuity of essential geodetic services, in relation to Auckland University of Technology's withdrawal from the Warkworth Radio Astronomical Observatory.

*To what does the Domestic Travel cost 'FCM March Consolidation jnl accrual' for \$2,912.95 refer?*

**Response:** This transaction is an accrual within our bookkeeping system that is reversed in the following months.

*And finally, the 'Space Symposium Dinner x3'. Is this referring to three separate dinners or a dinner bought for three people? If the latter, who were the people at the dinner and what was the overall cost?*

**Response:** This is a dinner for three MBIE staff and the total cost was NZD\$244.47.

**Attendees:**

- Iain Cossar, (at the time) Acting Deputy Secretary, Labour, Science & Enterprise Group. Overall responsibility for MBIE's space functions.
- Marta Mager, Counsellor USA.
- Dimitri Geidelberg, Policy Team Leader, Space Policy & Sector Development.