



11 July 2022



Dear [Redacted]

Thank you for your request made under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), received on 12 June 2022. You requested the following (numbered for ease of response):

1. *How much has IRD spent on Facebook or Instagram (Meta) ads in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and thus far in 2022? Could this data be broken down by year?*
2. *How much did IRD spend on advertising or marketing in total in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and thus far in 2022? Could this be broken down by type? (television, social media, outdoor, etc)*
3. *Does IRD directly use any customer information in the process of creating or targeting Facebook or Instagram ad campaigns? If so, what kind of customer information is used in this process (emails, phone numbers, etc)?*
4. *Does IRD use the Custom Audiences feature for Facebook or Instagram (Meta) advertising? If so, what identifiers are used (emails, phone numbers, addresses)?*

**Question 1**

***How much has IRD spent on Facebook or Instagram (Meta) ads in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and thus far in 2022? Could this data be broken down by year?***

Inland Revenue has utilised the services of advertising agencies over the period in question, and therefore cannot identify any advertising funds specifically paid to Meta Platforms Inc, where the transaction was carried out by an agency. Your request is therefore refused in part under section 18(g) of the OIA, as the information requested is not held by the department.

However, the information provided below is the expenditure that can be separately identified when advertising costs have been paid directly from Inland Revenue to Meta Platforms Inc. This means that any costs for advertisements carried out by an advertising agency have not been included in the table below.

Financial Year Ending	Spend on Meta Platforms Inc
30 June 2022	\$41,496.33
30 June 2021	\$87,581.76
30 June 2020	\$31,370.85
30 June 2019	\$50,426.22

Financial Year Ending	Spend on Meta Platforms Inc
30 June 2018	\$73,821.94
30 June 2017	\$35,750.80
30 June 2016	\$1,250.22
30 June 2015	\$4,945.97
30 June 2014	\$33,496.74

## Question 2

**How much did IRD spend on advertising or marketing in total in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and this far in 2022? Could this be broken down by type? (television, social media, outdoor, etc)**

Inland Revenue's total advertising costs for the 2014 – 2021 financial years are publicly available through the following links. I have therefore decided to refuse this part of your request for these years under section 18(d) of the OIA, as the information requested is publicly available.

The total costs for advertising and marketing for the 2014 – 2018 financial years is available in the response to question 50 of the 2017/2018 Annual Review and can be found here: [https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/52SCFE\\_EVI\\_80723\\_FE2652/1f6becac8baaf65aad976540917d61b599fe3fd9](https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/52SCFE_EVI_80723_FE2652/1f6becac8baaf65aad976540917d61b599fe3fd9)

The total costs for advertising and marketing for the 2019 – 2021 financial years is available in the response to question 50 of the 2020/2021 Annual Review and can be found here: [https://www.parliament.nz/resource/mi-NZ/53SCFE\\_EVI\\_116342\\_FE2642/b459ae96342110bc86e88ef76f913e9b4bcb2cfd](https://www.parliament.nz/resource/mi-NZ/53SCFE_EVI_116342_FE2642/b459ae96342110bc86e88ef76f913e9b4bcb2cfd)

For the 2022 financial year, the total cost for advertising and marketing was \$1,229,283.84.

As a portion of Inland Revenue's marketing spend is through advertising agencies, I am unable to break down the spend by channel. The key channels used however are digital advertising and radio. This part of your request is therefore refused under section 18(g) of the OIA, as the information requested is not held by Inland Revenue.

## Questions 3 and 4

**3. Does IRD directly use any customer information in the process of creating or targeting Facebook or Instagram ad campaigns? If so, what kind of customer information is used in this process (emails, phone numbers, etc)?**

**4. Does IRD use the Custom Audiences feature for Facebook or Instagram (Meta) advertising? If so, what identifiers are used (emails, phone numbers, addresses)?**

Customer information is sometimes used to directly target customers with information relevant to their circumstances. To reach customers with information that is relevant to them while protecting their privacy, we provide hashed and fully anonymised information to social media channels, including Facebook or Instagram (Meta Platforms Inc), when placing advertisements.

Although names, email addresses, phone numbers, ages, date of birth and city/country identifiers may be used to allow the matching of advertising messages to customers, the social media channel is not given any identifiable customer information. This is because the hashing process turns personal information into an encrypted string of letters and numbers. After hashing, the data cannot be decrypted and it's safe for Inland Revenue's

computer program to send information to the third party's computer program. Once custom audiences are created in Meta Platforms Inc, all matched and non-matched hashes are deleted. We fully comply with our obligations under the Tax Administration Act 1994 and the Privacy Act 2020 to protect taxpayers' personal information.

For more information, including a link to our privacy policy, visit our website here: <https://www.ird.govt.nz/about-this-site/conditions-of-use/social-media-pages-and-engagement-website>.

### **Right of Review**

If you disagree with my decisions on your OIA request, you can ask an Inland Revenue review officer to review my decisions. To ask for an internal review, please email the Commissioner of Inland Revenue at: [CommissionersCorrespondence@ird.govt.nz](mailto:CommissionersCorrespondence@ird.govt.nz).

Alternatively, under section 28(3) of the OIA, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision. You can contact the office of the Ombudsman by email at: [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz).

Choosing the internal right of review does not preclude requesters from subsequently seeking a review by the Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner.

### **Publishing of OIA response**

Please note that Inland Revenue regularly publishes responses to requests that may be of interest to the wider public on its website. We consider this response is of public interest so will publish this response in due course. Your personal details or any information that would identify you will be removed prior to it being published.

Thank you for your request. I trust that the information provided is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Pillay  
**Service Leader (Acting), Marketing & Communications**