



15 September 2025

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request made under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), received on 26 August 2025. You requested the following:

1. *When was the decision made to remove the option to speak to an actual human being on a call to the IRD phone number?*
2. *Who made the decision to remove the option to speak to an actual human being on a call to the IRD phone number?*
3. *When was the following automated response added to the IRD phone line: "We can't answer your call right now... ..Thank you for your understanding:" followed by an automatic hang up added to the IRD phone line.*
4. *When was the response time for IRD website requests changed to 15 working days?*
5. *Who approved the decision to change the response time for IRD website requests to 15 working days?*
6. *Please provide confirmation that an actual IRD call centre still exists, along with staffing numbers of the past five years.*

Please provide supporting documentation to each of the six requests above.

Item 1 and 2

There have been no decisions made to remove the option of speaking to an officer when contacting Inland Revenue via a phone line.

When a customer contacts Inland Revenue the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system routes customer calls to an officer based on the customers interactions with the IVR system, such as answers to automated questions.

Item 3

The automated message "We can't answer your call right now. Thank you for your understanding," is utilised when phone call volumes exceed the available number of officers. The message is also regularly reviewed and updated as required.

Your request for the exact date the automated message was first implemented is refused under section 18(g) of the OIA, as the information is not held by Inland Revenue, and we do not believe it is held by another agency.

Items 4 and 5

Please note, for items 4 and 5 we have interpreted 'web requests' as web messages through myIR.

Inland Revenue holds information regarding the response times listed here [Current processing times](#), from 2020 onwards. This information confirms no changes have been made to the 15 working day response time for web messages, or the other response times, since 2020.

Inland Revenue does not hold the information around who approved any changes to response times to website requests. Therefore, this part of your request is refused under section 18(g) of the OIA.

Item 6

Since 2018 Inland Revenue has moved to using broad role descriptions and ceased using business unit names referencing 'contact centres'. The Customer Service Officer Level 1 (CSO L1) role is used across customer segments, tax and social policy products and other channels. Officers in this role may be required to work on voice-based inbound and outbound calling work and on non-voice-based work, such as answering electronic communications.

The following table details the number of fixed term and permanent CSO L1 officers per year from 2020 to 2025, as at 30 June of each year.

Year	Number of Officers
2025	1,681
2024	1,703
2023	1,420
2022	1,479
2021	1,425
2020	1,705

Right of review

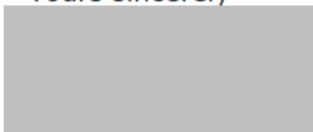
If you disagree with my decision on your OIA request, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the OIA. You can contact the office of the Ombudsman by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Publishing of OIA response

We intend to publish our response to your request on Inland Revenue's website (ird.govt.nz) as this information may be of interest to other members of the public. This letter, with your personal details removed, may be published in its entirety. Publishing responses increases the availability of information to the public and is consistent with the OIA's purpose of enabling more effective participation in the making and administration of laws and policies and promoting the accountability of officials.

Thank you again for your request.

Yours sincerely



Michael Waller

Segment Management Lead - Individuals