

Office of the Prime Minister

Prime Minister

Minister for National Security and Intelligence
Minister for Child Poverty Reduction
Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services
Associate Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage



Phil Pennington
RNZ
Phil.Pennington@rnz.co.nz

22 DEC 2022

Ref: PMO 2022-311

Tēnā koe Phil Pennington

Official Information Act request for Communications and briefings related to data centres and cloud companies

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request, received on 4 October 2022. You requested:

"RNZ requests release in full and in fully searchable format, re the following datacentre operators/builders and/or cloud companies - AWS, Microsoft, DCI, Datagrid, CDC, Lake Parime/Simply Energy, Google Cloud, Salesforce, Catalyst Cloud, CCL, Datacom, for the period from March 1, 2021 till now:

- *Copy/ies of any briefings or preparation of any kind for the PM prior to any meetings (including in US) or corresponding with any and each of these companies*
- *Copy/ies of any written or other communications of any sort between the PM and any and each of these companies that includes reference to*
 - o *Energy supply*
 - o *Energy resilience*
 - o *The govt or any of its agencies as potential customers of similar of a datacentre*
- *Copy/ies of any written or other communications of any sort between the PM and other Minister/their office that includes reference to*
 - o *Energy supply*
 - o *Energy resilience*
 - o *The govt or any of its agencies as potential customers or similar of a datacentre*

Pls advise of any query or transfer of this OIA within 7 working days

Pls respond taking into account the Ombudsman's recent exhortations for greater openness <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/political/475658/government-oia-response-processes-fuelling-growing-mistrust-ombudsman> ."

The timeframe for responding to your request was extended under section 15A of the Act by 25 working days because consultation was needed before a decision could be made on your request. We apologise for the additional delay in responding to your request.

In response to the remainder of your request please find in attachment A the remaining information relevant to the above request.

We have decided to release the relevant parts of the information provided in Attachment A, subject to information being withheld under one or more of the following sections of the Act, as applicable:

- section 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of individuals
- section 9(2)(g)(i), to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion

An appendix to a letter received from Amazon on 3 September 2021 is also publically available, here: <https://anz-resources.awscloud.com/other/aws-investment-in-new-zealand-aws-economic-impact-study>. Therefore, this part of your request is refused under section 18(d) as the information is publically available.

In making our decision, we have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Act.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review our decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

Ngā mihi nui,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Raj Nahna
Chief of Staff

Hon Dr David Clark

MP for Dunedin

Minister of Commerce and Consumer Affairs
Minister for the Digital Economy and Communications
Minister for State Owned Enterprises
Minister of Statistics
Minister Responsible for the Earthquake Commission



s9(2)(a)

s9(2)(a)

Amazon Web Services

s9(2)(a)

s9(2)(a)

Amazon Web Services

Dear s9(2)(a) and s9(2)(a)

Re: Amazon Web Services Introductory Meetings

Thank you for your respective letters of 19 August 2021 and 3 September 2021, and our meeting of 12 August 2021. I am writing on behalf of the Prime Minister, who has asked me as Minister for the Digital Economy and Communications to lead on the matters you have raised in your letters.

We were pleased to receive your update on Amazon Web Services' direction for its Aotearoa Cloud services. We welcome quality investment that helps us to achieve our aspirations as a digital nation, and your plans are a strong show of confidence in New Zealand in these globally challenging times for our economies and our people.

Digital technologies are an important part of our COVID-19 recovery. Cloud capabilities of the type that you are looking to establish here will play big role in our Digital Public Service, Digital Economy and Cyber plans. We're very pleased that your investment in technology and people will mean that we can access all the benefits of Cloud from closer to home, here in Aotearoa.

Data security is an important outcome for New Zealand, as we pursue our digital agenda. I'm looking forward to further discussing your plans with you, including your views on data security and any points of difference that could be considered for New Zealand's settings.

My officials advise that a working group has formed and communications planning for your announcement is underway with your AWS New Zealand team. I understand the group are also working through the series of requests posed in your 3 September 2021 to the Prime Minister, and I look forward to their advice on these matters in due course.

In the meantime, I would be pleased to support your messaging around your announcements later this month and would welcome a meeting with you to discuss the details. The Prime Minister and other Ministers may also wish to join this discussion. I understand my office has been in touch to confirm a time to meet.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Clark', with a stylized, looping flourish at the end.

Hon Dr David Clark
Minister for Digital Economy and Communications

Copy to:

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister

Hon Grant Robertson, Minister of Finance

Hon Andrew Little, Minister Responsible for the Government Communications
Security Bureau

Hon Stuart Nash, Minister for Economic and Regional Development

From: s9(2)(a)
To: J Ardern (MIN)
Cc: D Clark (MIN); G Robertson (MIN); S Nash (MIN); A Little Office (MIN); Paul James; Paul Ash [DPMC]; ^MBIE: Paul Stocks; s9(2)(a); s9(2)(a); s9(2)(a)
Subject: Confidential: Letter from AWS to the Prime Minister regarding a "Cloud Region" in New Zealand
Date: Tuesday, 7 September 2021 10:23:51 am
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[Letter to PM Ardern AWS Cloud Region in New Zealand Final Signed.pdf.html](#)
[Appendix A - AWS EIS for New Zealand.pdf.html](#)

Amazon Confidential

Dear Prime Minister Ardern,

Please find attached a confidential letter from s9(2)(a), s9(2)(a) Amazon Web Services (AWS), regarding AWS plans to make a major \$7.5 billion dollar investment in building new cloud computing infrastructure in New Zealand. Also attached is a confidential Economic Impact Study that outlines the scope and impact of our investment in New Zealand.

We look forward to an early opportunity to discuss the investment and a possible joint public announcement of it with you, and will follow up with your office to seek a time for that discussion as soon as possible.

Our AWS New Zealand point of contact for follow up on this matter is s9(2)(a), s9(2)(a) (s9(2)(a)@amazon.com).

Yours sincerely,
s9(2)(a)



s9(2)(a) | s9(2)(a)
Australia and New Zealand
Amazon Web Services
Ph: +s9(2)(a)
Email: s9(2)(a)@amazon.com



3 September 2021

The Right Honourable Jacinda Ardern
Prime Minister
Parliament Buildings
Wellington 6160

Re: AWS "Cloud Region" in New Zealand

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing to you to advise you that Amazon Web Services (AWS) plans to make an investment of 7.5 billion New Zealand Dollars to build new cloud computing infrastructure in New Zealand. On 12 August 2021, senior AWS representatives in New Zealand confidentially briefed Minister Clark, several New Zealand Government senior officials, and your office that AWS senior leadership had approved an AWS Region – a fully engineered network of data centres and the largest of our infrastructure capabilities – in Auckland, New Zealand in 2024.

An AWS Region¹ investment will provide businesses and public sector customers in New Zealand with onshore availability of AWS services and features, including advanced security, analytics, and machine learning services. To date, there are only 25 locations globally in which we have launched an AWS Region.

As outlined in the Economic Impact Study attached at [Appendix A](#), we estimate our proposed AWS Region in Auckland will result in a **direct investment of 7.5 billion New Zealand Dollars (NZD)** and an estimated **indirect economic impact of NZD 10.8 billion in value-added Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** in the next 15 years, as well as **1,000 full-time equivalent jobs**.

We believe that this investment will be **one of the largest ever overseas investments in information technology in New Zealand**. It is a strong expression of our confidence in New Zealand's economy, its sound and transparent regulatory environment, and the country's proud culture of innovation. We believe that this large commitment represents exactly what the New Zealand Productivity Commission recently identified as **"the right sort of foreign direct investment"**² for New Zealand. An AWS Region and related investments, can be transformative in:

- creating a **springboard for a vibrant and highly productive digital economy** from which New Zealand businesses, large and small, can grow locally with confidence and scale globally;
- delivering even **greater security and compliance assurance** by bringing our highly secure and available commercial public cloud infrastructure to New Zealand;
- enhancing the delivery of **government services, including supporting New Zealand's wellbeing priorities and major reform programmes**; and

¹ You can read more about what an AWS "Cloud Region" is at:

<https://docs.aws.amazon.com/AmazonRDS/latest/UserGuide/Concepts.RegionsAndAvailabilityZones.html>

² New Zealand Productivity Commission, [New Zealand firms: Reaching for the Frontier](#), April 2021, p.84



- **upskilling many thousands of New Zealanders** to build a future-ready working population, with a particular focus on building an inclusive digital economy.

With the right mix of technological capabilities, good policy and regulatory settings, and a skilled workforce, we see the potential for New Zealand to be a leader on the global stage as a fast-growing innovation hub that can propel strong, inclusive growth domestically as well as a fast-growing global technology exports industry. With advanced cloud technology onshore and with the right innovation climate, it is possible that overseas business – especially in the Pacific – could increasingly look to New Zealand as a reliable location for developing and operating advanced products and services.

We plan to launch this world class technology infrastructure in New Zealand in 2024. In our briefings earlier this month, we proposed establishing a dialogue mechanism between AWS and New Zealand Government representatives to confirm a format and timing of a public announcement in late September 2021. We are working towards a public announcement date of 23 September 2021. As a next step, **I hope that senior AWS representatives could meet with you and appropriate ministers to discuss this proposal in more detail**, whether virtually or in person. We hope that the New Zealand Government could identify a relevant Minister who can work with us to identify collaboration opportunities and agree mutual commitments that can help deliver the full potential of this investment in New Zealand's digital future. We have laid out a number of issues that we would like to discuss in Section D of this letter.

A. AWS investment in New Zealand

For over 15 years, Amazon Web Services has been the world's most comprehensive and broadly adopted cloud offering. AWS provides millions of customers with cloud based IT infrastructure and services to make them more agile, lower their costs, and deliver the data security. With tens of thousands of partner organizations around the world, AWS has a dynamic global information technology community. Our customers are across all industries and are of every size - including start-ups, small and medium businesses, multi-national enterprises, and public sector organisations.

The AWS Region in New Zealand will build upon our existing presence in-country. Today, AWS has offices in Auckland and Wellington, and employs more than 100 New Zealand staff including high value roles such as solutions architects, account managers, sales representatives, professional services consultants, and cloud experts and engineers. AWS also operates two Auckland-based "AWS Edge" locations (smaller clusters of AWS servers linked to the AWS cloud).

With this existing presence we are already supporting tens of thousands of active New Zealand customers and seeing them flourish using AWS. Our Kiwi customers today include iconic businesses such as Air New Zealand, Bank of New Zealand, Kiwi Bank, Vector and Xero, as well as exciting young companies like Education Perfect, Sharesies and Uneeq, and prestigious public institutions like the University of Auckland. We have heard the value they place on AWS and we see their desire to do more with cloud technology. The investment of an AWS Region in Auckland reflects our confidence in the exciting potential of our Kiwi customers and in the wider New Zealand economy. A number of our customers and their impressive achievements on the AWS cloud are profiled in the attached Economic Impact Study.

Our Auckland-based AWS Region, like all of our Regions, will be comprised of multiple "Availability Zones", which are technology infrastructure in separate and distinct geographic locations with enough distance to significantly reduce the risk of a single event impacting customers' business continuity, yet near enough to provide low latency for high availability applications. Each Availability Zone has independent power, cooling, and physical security and is connected via redundant, ultra-low-latency networks. AWS customers



focused on high availability can design their applications to run in multiple Availability Zones to achieve even greater fault tolerance. Built upon this robust infrastructure, AWS supports more security standards and compliance certifications than any other offering.³

B. Economic benefits

As noted above, we have prepared an Economic Impact Study that outlines the expected economic value from the deployment and operation of the AWS Region in New Zealand. A copy is attached as Appendix A. The study shows that over 15 years:

- Our capex and opex direct investments in New Zealand are estimated to reach **NZD 7.5 billion**;
- The construction and operation of the infrastructure will generate an estimated wider economic benefit of approximately **NZD 10.8 billion in value-added GDP**; and
- We estimate the construction and operation of the infrastructure will also support approximately **1,000 full-time equivalent jobs** in sectors such as telecommunications, non-residential construction, electricity generation and data centre personnel.

We believe an AWS Region investment represents exactly what the New Zealand Productivity Commission's recent report on Frontier Firms called "**the right sort of Foreign Direct Investment.**" Specifically, the Commission noted that such investments will drive innovation, grow new export markets, create a demand for skills and more training, attract international talent, and build career paths that help keep skilled people in New Zealand. The Productivity Commission further noted such investments provide access to global value chains and, through the diffusion of innovation, can help domestic firms improve their productivity and support the development of specialized networks of partners, suppliers and researchers over the long term. Our investment in an AWS Region in New Zealand will bring a new capability that can deliver categorically on all of these productivity objectives.

An AWS Region investment will **significantly boost economic growth and productivity in New Zealand's technology and non-technology sectors**. Recent research in New Zealand suggests that a 20 percent increase in the uptake of cloud computing in New Zealand would lead to annual real GDP growth of NZD3.5 billion to 6.2 billion.⁴ The New Zealand Tech Alliance (NZTech) has said that continued investment, such as in cloud technology, and the right policies will put the New Zealand technology sector on track to become the country's biggest export industry, potentially worth NZD16 billion per annum by 2030. Beyond the technology sector, consulting firm AlphaBeta recently reported that, with the necessary technology and upskilling investments and the right regulatory and policy settings, New Zealand could leverage its digital economy to realise an annual increase of up to NZD46.6 billion in economic value in its non-technology sectors by 2030.⁵

C. Wider AWS Region benefits for New Zealand

We believe an AWS Region can be a powerful engine to help realise the three core objectives of the Government's forthcoming Digital Aotearoa strategy, including by ensuring that the benefits of advanced cloud technology can be more readily accessed by all New Zealanders.

³ Learn more about our security and compliance programs at: <https://aws.amazon.com/compliance/programs/>

⁴ New Zealand Institute for Economic Research, [Economic Potential of Cloud-based Business Tools](#), March 2020

⁵ AlphaBeta, [Unlocking New Zealand's Digital Potential](#); April 2021



It will be an enabler for New Zealand businesses, government agencies and other organisations to share in the benefits of advanced cloud technology. It will provide a significant new capability that can make a substantial long-term contribution to:

- **building a strong digital economy that includes everyone.** We share the vision for an inclusive transition to a technology-enabled workforce and a digital economy that works for all New Zealanders, and particularly for Māori, Pasifika, youth, women and rural New Zealanders. We are eager to discuss joint opportunities for upskilling many thousands of New Zealanders.
- **growing a vibrant, high productivity technology ecosystem.** AWS will work with our extensive network of tens of thousands of New Zealand customers and AWS partners to grow a thriving technology industry and innovation culture for small business and larger companies alike.
- **supporting wellbeing priorities and reform programmes.** AWS brings a capability that can help the government achieve its well-being budget priorities and change programmes such as health transformation and local government reforms, infrastructure modernisation, climate action and resource management reforms. Advanced public cloud capabilities can enable better cross-agency collaboration, streamlined citizen interactions and deliver public programmes at scale.
- **delivering on climate commitments:** In line with the New Zealand Government's commitment to lowering emissions by 30 percent from 2005 levels by 2030, and Amazon's *Climate Pledge* to achieve net zero emissions by 2040, we are committed to ensuring that our infrastructure investments deliver on a net zero emissions target. Migration of legacy technology operations to public cloud can measurably draw down emissions in any sector or enterprise that uses cloud.⁶ When we factor in the carbon intensity of consumed electricity and renewable energy purchases, which reduce associated carbon emissions, AWS performs the same task with an 88% lower carbon footprint. We are also seeing opportunities for cloud-based big data and analytics to spur the needed innovation that contributes to emissions reduction planning, execution and accountability.

D. Collaboration with the New Zealand Government

In pursuit of the benefits outlined above, we are eager to begin a dialogue with the appropriate New Zealand Government Minister and senior officials on a number of important topics relevant to our investment. I would like to propose that our teams work together towards a public announcement on 23 September, with a view to concluding a memorandum of understanding on the AWS Region investment and our collaboration by end-November 2021. From an AWS perspective, there are five broad collaboration topics we would like to discuss further:

Topic 1: Planning an impactful public announcement of an AWS Region in New Zealand: We anticipate being in a position to announce our investment publicly by 23 September 2021. We would be delighted to announce this in coordination with you and other senior members of the New Zealand Government. We envisage making a public announcement that would describe the AWS infrastructure and its expected economic and wider benefits for New Zealand. We would aim to reiterate our confidence in the New Zealand economy and the innovation opportunity we see working with Kiwi customers – large and small. We would articulate our commitment to working with customers and the government over the long term to accelerate the country's digital transformation and economic growth, and realise an inclusive, innovative and high productivity digital economy, as well as sustainability for the future. We are eager to profile a number of our New Zealand customers in making this announcement. We believe a strong announcement will reinforce recognition of New Zealand's management of COVID-19 and its growth

⁶ You can read more about this at https://sustainability.aboutamazon.com/carbon_reduction_aws.pdf and about our overall approach to sustainability at: <https://sustainability.aboutamazon.com/environment/the-cloud?energyType=true>



prospects as a technology and innovation hub. We expect strong interest from local media and select global press. We would aim to maintain a drumbeat of positive updates through 2022 and 2023 and as we prepare for launch.

Topic 2: Skilling up an inclusive cloud-capable New Zealand workforce: At the forefront of the concerns of many of our Kiwi customers today is the availability of digitally skilled technology workers. There are many challenges to work through including the lack of robust early career pathways, a lack of confidence among teachers to deliver on digital curricula, insufficient investment by the public and private sector in skilling the labour force, and the under-representation of women, Māori and Pasifika in technology roles.⁷ We would like to discuss opportunities for how AWS can work together with government to upskill many tens of thousands more New Zealanders in digital and cloud technology skills over the next five years. We would like to discuss working together to support the recommendations in the *Digital Skills Aotearoa Report* (2021) and the forthcoming Digital Industry Transformation Plan. We see real opportunities in working together on recognising industry certifications within New Zealand's qualifications and industry training frameworks. This could include mapping industry training programmes to educational curricula so that budding technologists can emerge from their education with both national qualifications and workforce-ready industry certifications.

As we work on upskilling New Zealanders, we would also like to discuss industry challenges arising from the restrictions on sourcing highly skilled technology workers from overseas. Many New Zealand customers and partners are experiencing acute constraints to their growth prospects due to a lack of highly qualified technology workers, while also losing talented Kiwis overseas. We can validate this with our own challenges in filling highly experienced and skilled roles. In support of the wider New Zealand technology industry, we would like to discuss with the feasibility of a sector agreement, or similar, which would identify a modest number of critical skills and positions needed to propel growth in the sector in the short to medium term as Kiwi talent continues to grow through.

Topic 3: Enabling world-class public sector services delivery in New Zealand: We see the potential for the New Zealand public service, and the broader public sector, to be world leaders in digitally-enabled services delivery. With the added confidence of access to in-country cloud services, it is our hope that New Zealand will embrace a world-leading public sector approach to cloud technology adoption, similar to that in the United Kingdom and the New South Wales Government in Australia. We would very much like to discuss opportunities we see for fine-tuning New Zealand's policy settings that can support public sector cloud technology enablement, and in particular:

- setting a clear cloud technology vision for government and refreshing the existing public service "cloud-first policy";
- building a strong digital public sector, through enhancing cloud awareness and training programmes for public servants;
- enhanced mechanisms to support public sector cloud adoption including establishing a modern and improved public cloud services procurement panel;
- refreshing and replacing the AWS-New Zealand Government Cloud Framework Agreement; and
- working together to ensure that our new cloud infrastructure investment and controls can meet New Zealand Government requirements for hosting data at higher security classification levels, beyond the currently approved Restricted data classification.

⁷ NZ Digital Skills Forum, *Digital Skills Aotearoa: Digital Skills For Our Digital Future*, March 2021



We would also like to discuss establishing an ongoing “innovation dialogue” on forward-looking technology solutions for addressing societal and economic challenges and opportunities. We are ready to share our experiences and insights on the potential for technology to transform service delivery experiences for New Zealanders. For major reforms, such as the Health and Disability Review or Three Waters Reform Programme, we would like to find opportunities to ideate with Government on the art of the possible by drawing upon our global experience and thought leadership on large-scale digital transformations. Climate change, resource management, sustainability, and emergency management are other examples of fields in which we can draw on our global expertise and experience.

Topic 4: Improving regulator awareness of how cloud technology can unlock innovation, deliver value for consumers, and provide better compliance and assurance: As noted in the Productivity Commission’s *Frontier Firms (2021)* Report, Government and regulators could help usher in a generational modernization opportunity for many of New Zealand’s major industries. With world class technological capabilities coming onshore, New Zealand’s major regulated industries – such as banking/financial services, telecommunications, healthcare, power and utilities – have an important opportunity to drive positive change. Public cloud solutions can deliver better security and compliance outcomes for regulators, better value for money and service delivery for consumers, and support innovation in industry. We would like to discuss opportunities to help regulators and their regulated entities to better understand the transformational opportunities afforded by cloud services. We are seeking government advice and support on how best to initiate and sustain an educational dialogue with various industry regulators on the innovation, productivity, security, compliance and resilience benefits of cloud technology for those industries and for New Zealand consumers. For example in the financial services industry, we are eager work with the Reserve Bank to demonstrate the compliance, security and business benefits of cloud services in the banking sector, and to provide assurance about the resilience, security and availability of cloud technology. In other regulated industries, for example the energy sector, upcoming regulatory reviews present a rare opportunity for New Zealand to leverage global best practices to propel its energy sector to the forefront of technology adoption for the benefit of Kiwi consumers, and to use cloud-driven data and analytics to help realise New Zealand’s ambitious climate targets through its energy transition.

Topic 5: Ensuring our infrastructure is available as soon as possible and contributes to climate and sustainability goals: We would be grateful for the support of the New Zealand Government in facilitating, as appropriate, the timely consideration of consent applications to support the earliest possible infrastructure launch. Additionally, we would like to discuss the potential of working with the New Zealand Government and the Auckland City Council on possible investments in water management projects and smart technology collaborations in the water sector as a further opportunity to work together on sustainability issues. As outlined in the attached economic impact study, we are committed to working to deliver a net zero carbon footprint for all new AWS infrastructure globally.

E. Next steps

As an immediate next step I hope that senior AWS representatives in New Zealand could meet with you and appropriate ministers to discuss this proposal in more detail, whether virtually or in person. We hope to establish a time-bound dialogue with an appointed lead Minister(s) and/or senior officials who are empowered to discuss and agree on the topics outlined in Section D above. I would like to propose that our teams work together towards a public announcement on 23 September, with a view to concluding a memorandum of understanding on the AWS Region investment and our collaboration topics by end-November 2021. In parallel, we will commence our application for a consent from the Overseas Investment Office. We look forward to working with you to realise this investment so that our proposed AWS Region investment in Auckland is able to bring enduring value to all New Zealanders.



I would like to recognize that this is a challenging time in New Zealand as you grapple with an outbreak of the Delta virus. On behalf of all of my AWS colleagues in New Zealand, please accept my sincere appreciation of your continuing strong leadership of New Zealand's COVID-19 response. I know it is a point of particular pride among the AWS team that the New Zealand's Ministry of Health's COVID Tracer App is run on AWS as part of your scaled up infrastructure for responding to the pandemic. I wish you and all New Zealanders the very best in navigating successfully the country's current outbreak.

My team and I look forward to engaging with you on the bright opportunities that lie ahead.

Yours sincerely,

s9(2)(a)

s9(2)(a)

s9(2)(a)

Amazon Web Services

cc.

Hon. Mr. Grant Robertson, Deputy Prime Minister

Hon. Dr. David Clark, Minister for Digital Economy and Communications

Hon. Mr. Andrew Little, Minister responsible for the Government Communications Security Bureau

Hon. Mr. Stewart Nash, Minister for Economic and Regional Development

Mr. Paul James, Government Chief Digital Officer, Secretary for Internal Affairs

Mr. Paul Ash, Prime Minister's Special Representative on Cyber and Digital, Christchurch Call and Cyber Coordinator, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Mr. Paul Stocks, Deputy Chief Executive for Labour, Science and Enterprise, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment



PRIME MINISTER
TE PIRIMIA

24/06/2022

s9(2)(a)

s9(2)(a)

Amazon Web Services

Dear s9(2)(a)

It was a pleasure to meet with you in Seattle during my recent visit to the United States. Thank you for hosting me and the New Zealand delegation at your headquarters.

Thank you also for your part in hosting the New Zealand delegation at the Mayor of Seattle's welcome reception. As I said in my remarks there, I am deeply impressed by the technology capabilities developed in Seattle. I am encouraged by the potential for increased linkages with New Zealand, and for exchanges of skills, people, technology, trade, and investment. It is heartening to know that AWS is a key player in deepening this relationship.

I am excited about the capabilities that can be unlocked because of your data centre region in New Zealand. These include opportunities for economic growth and digital exports, increased digital skills training and employment opportunities for New Zealanders, and the chance for sophisticated public good applications of this new digital infrastructure. I appreciated hearing your outline of AWS' plans and approach to working in New Zealand and the region, and hope that it will be possible rapidly to make progress on the elements of this that we discussed in our meeting.

Linked to this, it was good to discuss the opportunities inherent in a digital technology partnership between New Zealand and the United States. I was pleased, shortly after our meeting, to work on this with President Biden and to encapsulate the key elements in our Joint Statement. Thank you for your support for this initiative, including the efforts of your team here in New Zealand, working on this with officials. My team will reconnect shortly as we operationalise this work.

I greatly value the contribution Amazon Group, including AWS, makes as a supporter of the Christchurch Call. The tragic events in Buffalo in May underline that while we have achieved a good deal, our work is not complete. As we build the next set of technologies that underpin the internet, I want to work with you and other supporters to ensure these continue to reflect our desire for a free, open, global, interoperable, reliable, and secure internet, and that we are working to prevent terrorists and violent extremists from exploiting it for their own ends.

It is reassuring to know I can count on your support with this work. I look forward to Amazon Group's participation at the next Christchurch Call Leaders' Summit in September.

Yours sincerely

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern
Prime Minister of New Zealand



PRIME MINISTER
TE PIRIMIA

24/06/2022

s9(2)(a)

s9(2)(a)

Amazon Group

s9(2)(a)

s9(2)(a)

Amazon Group

Dear s9(2)(a) and s9(2)(a)

It was a pleasure to meet with you s9(2)(a) and with s9(2)(a) in Seattle during my recent visit to the United States.

I greatly enjoyed our wide-ranging discussion, on skills development and the capabilities which AWS's new data centre region could unlock. I was also deeply struck by the potential for a closer and stronger partnership between New Zealand and the City of Seattle, which I believe holds great promise for greater trade, investment, human, and technology links.

I value the contribution Amazon Group makes as a supporter of the Christchurch Call and it was good to be able to discuss this with s9(2)(a), s9(2)(a) and your team while in Seattle. The tragic events in Buffalo underline that we have achieved a great deal, especially in improving our response to crises that materialise online.

I am also conscious there is still much to be done as a multistakeholder community, including addressing remaining gaps in our crisis response mechanisms and making further progress on understanding and addressing the underlying drivers of radicalisation to violence. The responsiveness of your Amazon and Twitch teams following the Buffalo attack has been very helpful as we seek to take this work forward. I have asked my team to connect with you and to continue work on the presenting issues in crisis response and to consider some areas of focus for the future of the Call.

In particular, as the next set of technologies that underpin the internet is built, I want to ensure it reflects our shared objective of a free, open, global, interoperable, reliable, and secure internet, and that we are working to prevent terrorists and violent extremists from exploiting it for their own ends.

With President Macron I am looking to convene a Christchurch Call Leaders' Summit in New York during UN Leaders Week in September. That will be an opportunity to sit down face to face with Leaders from tech, civil society, and government to talk about what we've achieved and what we need to do next. I look forward to your participation in that meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern
Prime Minister of New Zealand



PRIME MINISTER

TE PIRIMIA

14 SEP 2022

s9(2)(a)

Chief Executive Officer
Amazon Web Services

Dear s9(2)(a)

Thank you for your letter of 11 July 2022 following on from my visit on 27 May 2022.

I am pleased to hear that the MOU between AWS and the GCDO is advancing. I recognise, as we discussed in our May meeting, that New Zealand's decentralised approach to agency decision-making can present challenges for these kinds of ambitious and joined-up partnerships. But I am confident that a high-quality agreement is possible, including shared commitments for collaboration on building digital skills and capability, enabling the public sector to harness the benefits of cloud technologies, and supporting innovation and cybersecurity solutions for the public sector and New Zealand businesses.

Continuing to improve digital skills at all levels is critical for a vibrant and inclusive economy. We have government interventions focused on foundational digital skills for small businesses and for the digitally excluded segments of the population. It sounds like the AWS re-training and inclusion initiatives you refer to could create further helpful opportunities for groups who are under-represented in tech sector jobs at present.

We also recognise the need to create new and better pathways for New Zealanders to get into the tech sector and to grow their skills over time. Your plan to train up to 20,000 New Zealanders a year for five years suggests that you foresee a high level of customer demand for AWS services. Working together, and with the right policies in place, we can clearly make a real difference.

As you'll no doubt be aware, analysis by the Digital Skills Forum shows that we have a good supply of tertiary graduates in digital technology, and historically we've also had significant numbers of highly-skilled migrant workers in technology filling specialised roles. Our national tech sector skills challenge is less about the number of people with some level of digital skills but instead about a mismatch between the skills that people have and those that employers say they are looking for. Increasingly, our policy will need to focus on how to encourage employers both to take on more people at the entry level, and to develop the skills of those they already have to fill more specialised or higher-skilled technology jobs.

The Digital Technologies Industry Transformation Plan (ITP) is the Government's long-term vehicle to progress these issues through a strong industry-government partnership. Some of the ITP's skills initiatives are already underway, including rolling out the Skills Framework for the Information Age as you have noted. I would encourage you to connect with officials in the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) on the ITP and its skills and talent focus area in particular, where its priority actions accord with your proposals.

I would welcome AWS support for this policy direction and look forward to seeing what comes out of it. It is for Minister Clark to consider specific policy initiatives but I know that he is seized of the importance of growth in the digital sector, and that there are some specific issues to resolve, for example, to encourage agencies to shift to modern cloud services, to ensure they are clear on the meaning and implications of data sovereignty for their operations, and to improve their ICT security. There may also be opportunities to assist our neighbours in the Pacific, as you mention in your letter.

Thank you also for Amazon's ongoing work to meet its commitments under the Christchurch Call. I am looking forward to Call Summit on the margins of the UN General Assembly in a few short weeks. I plan that we use this time to review progress so far and to set out next steps, especially on algorithmic matters and on continuing to improve crisis response as the Call moves into its third year.

Your sincerely



Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern
PRIME MINISTER

cc.

Hon Damien O'Connor, Minister for Trade and Export Growth

Hon Dr David Clark, Minister for Digital Economy and Communications

Brook Barrington, Chief Executive, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Chris Seed, Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Paul Ash, Prime Minister's Special Representative on the Christchurch Call and Cyber

Coordinator, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Paul James, Government Chief Digital Officer, Secretary for Internal Affairs

Paul Stocks, Deputy Chief Executive, Ministry of Business, Innovation and
Employment

Catalyst Cloud Limited

Out of Scope

----- Forwarded Message -----

Subject: From Seattle to Willis St

Date: Tue, 14 Jun 2022 13:42:57 +1200

From: Dave Moskovitz ^{s9(2)(a)} [@mosk.nz](mailto:dave@mosk.nz)

To: Rt. Hon Jacinda Ardern [<Jacinda.Ardern@parliament.govt.nz>](mailto:Jacinda.Ardern@parliament.govt.nz)

CC: Paul Ash [DPMC] [<Paul.Ash@dpmc.govt.nz>](mailto:Paul.Ash@dpmc.govt.nz)

Kia ora Jacinda,

I'd like to congratulate you on your recent trip to the USA - there is simply no-one who represents Aotearoa New Zealand like you. I've spoken to a number of my friends who were part of the delegation, and they basically reiterated the same thing - the credibility, good work, and focus on doing the right thing have given you the ability to open doors which will benefit all New Zealanders.

On your trip, you visited two of the three cloud computing providers who are authorised to provide cloud services to the New Zealand Government - AWS and Microsoft, both companies owned by the richest men in the world, based in Seattle. We applaud you for supporting these relationships which will create opportunities for NZ companies to better do business with the world, and bring our countries closer together.

But did you know that there is a third cloud provider based right here in Wellington? Catalyst Cloud is NZ's only cloud provider that is owned by New Zealanders, answers only to the New Zealand legal system, whose purpose is specifically for the benefit of New Zealand, and that has a Cloud Framework Agreement with DIA. We don't own superyachts, private jets, or spacecraft - I drive around in a 2007 Prius, because it's the right thing to do. We support people and organisations who are aligned to our values of being kind and doing the right thing - the other two providers have questionable credentials in their business ethics.

From your excellent work on the Christchurch Call, you know how hard it is to even influence the direction of the large overseas platforms like AWS, Microsoft, and others -

much less try to exert any control over them. In these days of increased global uncertainty and easily disrupted supply chains, we believe it is critical to have critical New Zealand resources controlled by New Zealanders who are answerable to the New Zealand Government.

Now that you've been to Seattle, we'd like you to come visit us, the only New Zealand cloud provider, at our head offices in Willis St. We'd like to talk to you about the importance of data sovereignty, our specific alignment with NZG goals, and the opportunity we present to NZ government agencies.

We hope to see you soon at Catalyst House for a cuppa.

Ka nui te mihi
Dave Moskovitz

--
Dave Moskovitz <https://dave> ter: @davemosk
Email: [s9\(2\)\(a\)@mosk.nz](mailto:s9(2)(a)@mosk.nz) / Tel NZ [s9\(2\)\(a\)skovitz](tel:s9(2)(a)skovitz)
Linkedin: [s9\(2\)\(a\)skovitz](#)
Calendar: [s9\(2\)\(a\)skovitz](#)

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

From: s9(2)(a)
To: j.ardern@ministers.govt.nz; ^Parliament: Leroy Taylor; Andrew Campbell
Cc: j.tinetti@ministers.govt.nz; ^Parliament: Esther Robinson; m.woods@ministers.govt.nz; Stuart Nash; k.faafoi@ministers.govt.nz; d.clark@ministers.govt.nz; s9(2)(a) ; s9(2)(a) ; s9(2)(a) @parliament.govt.nz; s9(2)(a) [DPMC]; s9(2)(a) [DPMC]
Subject: Confidential Invitation to Open Google's New Zealand Office - Friday 29 Oct or w/b1 Nov
Date: Friday, 16 July 2021 10:50:05 am
Attachments: Invitation to Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern.pdf

Kia ora Prime Minister

Please find attached an invitation from Caroline Rainsford, Managing Director Google Australia and New Zealand to:

- officially open Google's first purpose built office at 10 Madden Street, Auckland on Friday 29 October or during the week beginning 1 November
- acknowledge the establishment of our first in-country engineering presence
- and congratulate recipients of grants to help teachers to develop new digital skills.

Please note, a hard copy of this invitation has also been sent to your office and copied to relevant Ministers.

Nga mihi nui
Ross

Ross Young | Head of Government Affairs and Public Policy, Google New Zealand |
s9(2)(a) | s9(2)(a)



Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern
Prime Minister
Parliament
Wellington, NZ
j.ardern@ministers.govt.nz

14 July 2021

Tēnā koe Prime Minister

Invitation to Open Google's New Auckland Office in October / November - *Commercial in Confidence*

It was wonderful to talk with you at Auckland's Future Now. I hope that you enjoyed the event and found the discussion to be useful.

As Google approaches 15 years in the country, I am pleased to share that it is increasing its commitment to Aotearoa New Zealand.

I would be honoured if you would officially open Google's first purpose built office at 10 Madden Street, Auckland - perhaps Friday 29 October or during the week beginning 1 November - and acknowledge the establishment of our first in-country engineering presence and congratulate recipients of a grant to help teachers to develop new digital skills.

Opening New Auckland Office

Google now employs fifty people in NZ and we plan to create more jobs here over the coming years. Our first step towards this is our first purpose built office in New Zealand at 10 Madden Street. Designed in consultation with Ngāti Whātua-o-Ōrākei, this new space will connect Aotearoa and Google through the visual metaphor of the tide.

In a uniquely Google way, through highlights of innovation and experiential technology, this space reflects the reciprocal relationship between Google and Aotearoa. The office also includes an event space where we plan to host business leaders, technologists and the

wider community over the coming years. Please note, we will host a variety of events in the new office in August, leading up to an official opening in October.

Establishing a Google Engineering presence in NZ

I was inspired to read about your Government's immigration reset to 'create highly-skilled jobs, enable the valuable transfer of knowledge and technology, and increase international connectivity for New Zealand firms.'

With that in mind and subject to visa approvals, I am pleased to share that Google will establish its first in-country engineering presence in Auckland in the coming months.

With this initial establishment Google is committing to NZ as the primary location for an ambitious and promising early-stage engineering project. In the short term, we intend to relocate four engineering executives from Google HQ to Auckland and hire two local senior engineers. Growth for the project team will be primarily NZ-based, contingent on project success.

As part of this establishment we will attract and hire local software engineering talent. By engaging with local institutions we'll help raise the importance of Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence in Aotearoa's contemporary tech landscape.

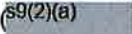
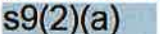
I'm also very pleased to advise that [Urs Hölzle](#), Senior Vice President of Google Cloud Infrastructure is relocating to New Zealand. Urs is one of the first Google employees and was instrumental in designing Google's computer infrastructure. Urs is also a committed environmentalist and will lead his global engineering team of almost 20,000 employees from Auckland.

Supporting Teachers Digital Skills

Digital Technology content has recently been mandated for all schools and added to the education curriculum. Although still early in its rollout, teacher capacity to implement the Digital Technologies curriculum has been suggested as a key area for improvement. For example, a study by the Education Review Office in 2019, found that only 7% of teachers reported having the knowledge and skills to implement the curriculum.

To help respond to these types of challenges, Google's [Educator Professional Development Grants](#) are awarded annually to organisations looking to upskill educators to teach computer science or related curricula. Funding is awarded to professional development programs that demonstrate a sound pedagogical approach to computer science and offer a support community that fosters innovation and shared learning.

In 2021, I'm pleased to share that three organisations in New Zealand were awarded four Educator PD Grants including the University of Canterbury (two programmes), the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, and AUT University. For further details of Google's work with communities across Aotearoa New Zealand please see our new [Community Engagement Report](#).

For the event we plan to invite the Education Grant recipients, our [partners from community](#), business leaders and US diplomatic representatives in NZ. Please feel free to have your office contact Ross Young, Head of Government Affairs for any additional information (s9(2)(a)  [@google.com](#), s9(2)(a) ).

Nāku noa

s9(2)(a) 

Caroline Rainsford
Managing Director Google Australia and New Zealand

Copy to:

Hon Megan Woods
Minister for Energy and Resources
Minister for Science and Innovation

Hon Stuart Nash
Minister for Economic and Regional Development

Hon Kris Faafoi
Minister for Broadcasting and Media
Minister for Immigration

Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister for Education
Minister for Women
Minister for Internal Affairs

Hon David Clark
Minister for the Digital Economy and Communications

Out of Scope

From: Ross Young s9(2)(a) google.com>
Sent: Tuesday, 27 July 2021 11:52 am
To: j.ardern@ministers.govt.nz; ^Parliament: s9(2)(a) @parliament.govt.nz>; Andrew Campbell s9(2)(a) @parliament.govt.nz>
Cc: j.tinetti@ministers.govt.nz; ^Parliament: s9(2)(a) @parliament.govt.nz>; m.woods@ministers.govt.nz; Stuart Nash <s.nash@ministers.govt.nz>; k.faafoi@ministers.govt.nz; d.clark@ministers.govt.nz; s9(2)(a) s9(2)(a) @parliament.govt.nz>; s9(2)(a) @parliament.govt.nz>; s9(2)(a) @parliament.govt.nz; s9(2)(a) [DPMC] s9(2)(a) @dPMC.govt.nz>; Paul Ash [DPMC] s9(2)(a) @dPMC.govt.nz>; s9(2)(a) - SYD s9(2)(a) @nzte.govt.nz>

Subject: Re: Confidential Invitation to Open Google's New Zealand Office - Friday 29 Oct or w/b1 Nov

Kia ora Prime Minister

I hope all's well with you and yours.

This email provides some additional information about our invitation to officially open Google's first purpose built office in New Zealand.

- Attached is a media release about Google's new office which is embargoed until tomorrow Wednesday 28 July: 5am NZT print / 8am NZT online.
- Confidentially, we also plan to announce three new Google grants at the official opening event in Oct/Nov:
 - NZD\$100,000 for [Manaiaikalani Education's Digital Fluency Intensive](#) to help teachers develop digital skills, with a focus on teachers from schools in deciles 1-3 across NZ.
 - NZD\$100,000 for [SeniorNet](#) to empower 100 senior volunteer trainers through

capacity-building workshops who will upskill 10,000 senior learners in essential digital literacy skills such as media literacy and online safety.

- NZD\$100,000 for [Netsafe's online safety programmes](#) to help children and young people stay safe online.

We will of course invite grantees to the official opening event but please feel free to contact me if you or your Office have any questions or concerns.

Nga mihi nui

Ross Young

Ross Young | Head of Government Affairs and Public Policy, Google New Zealand | s9(2)(a) [google.com](#) | s9(2)(a)

On Fri, 16 Jul 2021 at 10:49, Ross Young s9(2)(a) [google.com](#) wrote:

Kia ora Prime Minister

Please find attached an invitation from Caroline Rainsford, Managing Director Google Australia and New Zealand to:

- officially open Google's first purpose built office at 10 Madden Street, Auckland on Friday 29 October or during the week beginning 1 November
- acknowledge the establishment of our first in-country engineering presence
- and congratulate recipients of grants to help teachers to develop new digital skills.

Please note, a hard copy of this invitation has also been sent to your office and copied to relevant Ministers.

Nga mihi nui

Ross

Ross Young | Head of Government Affairs and Public Policy, Google New Zealand | s9(2)(a) [google.com](#) | s9(2)(a)

Wednesday 28 July: Embargo 5am NZT print / 8am NZT online – Google New Zealand announced today it is ramping up investment in Aotearoa with the opening of its first purpose built office in Auckland and the establishment of the first local Engineering team, with local hires in the works. Today also marks the launch of a new Google Cloud Dedicated Interconnect location in Auckland and AUNZ Google Cloud region in Melbourne, the combination of which better serve New Zealand businesses.

Google New Zealand Country Director, Caroline Rainsford said *"Google is invested in New Zealand's digital future. As we approach 15 years on the ground here our new home will foster the creativity and collaboration that inspires the team to use innovation and technology to solve problems for Kiwi businesses, schools, teachers, communities and more. As New Zealand moves through the next phase of economic recovery we'll continue to find ways to bring the best of Google to Aotearoa."*

The new office is a uniquely-Google space - with an experiential ceiling, kayaks for a reception desk, a cafe that takes its likeness from a chilly bin and an event space where the Google team plan to host business leaders, technologists and the wider community over the coming years. With room for a growing team the office is designed to suit Google's new hybrid approach to work. In an effort to attract and hire local software engineering talent, Google will shortly be recruiting roles for the Engineering team that will be established here at the Auckland site. This team will contribute to some of the research and development work being done by Google, and will look to engage local institutions to help raise the importance of Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence in Aotearoa's tech landscape.

Caroline Rainsford, Country Director Google New Zealand continued, *"Google is passionate about New Zealand's thriving tech ecosystem, and our new Engineering presence demonstrates that we're committed and contributing to this. We hope to strengthen our local partnerships to improve New Zealand's native AI capability and in turn advance the technology landscape and build a better future for all Kiwis."*

In addition, Google is investing in expanded Cloud infrastructure in response to local customer demand. This includes a new Google Cloud Dedicated Interconnect location in Auckland that connects New Zealand to Google's private secure network and ensures customer data never traverses the public internet; as well as a second AUNZ Google Cloud region in Melbourne.

Collectively, these investments will deliver geographically distributed and secure infrastructure to customers across New Zealand, enabling them to take advantage of the cleanest cloud in the industry. Two geographically separated cloud regions with three zones each also makes Google Cloud the first hyperscaler to provide this capability in the AUNZ region today.

Urs Hölzle, SVP Cloud Infrastructure said, *"We're investing in our Cloud infrastructure to serve the needs of our growing base of customers in Aotearoa NZ and Australia. Our Dedicated Cloud Interconnect in Auckland will hardwire New Zealand into our global infrastructure backbone, and Kiwi organisations of all sizes will benefit from the speed, scalability and security of our expanded Cloud region footprint in AUNZ as they continue to drive their digital transformation agenda."*

Google New Zealand employs around 50 people now based in Auckland and Wellington. The team works to help Kiwis find new ways to collaborate, reach audiences and get things done. Google is committed to helping all Kiwis with the digital knowledge and capabilities they need now and in the future. Learn more about the work being done at about.google.

ENDS

For more information, please contact s9(2)(a) [@google.com](mailto:s9(2)(a)@google.com)

Office of the Prime Minister

Prime Minister

Minister for National Security and Intelligence

Minister for Child Poverty Reduction

Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services

Associate Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage



| Invitation and meeting advice | |
|--|---|
| Event name | Invitation to Open Google's new New Zealand Office |
| Priority for PM's attendance Please circle/highlight | MEDIUM |
| Attendance recommendation Should the Prime Minister attend, and why are you making that recommendation? | <p>s9(2)(g)(i)</p> <p>This announcement relates to the opening of a New Zealand Office, with some support to the non-governmental sector. It is intended to accompany the construction of a data centre in Melbourne and the marketing of that as a solution for New Zealand customers. The announcement does not relate to any significant investment in New Zealand, although Google is establishing a small engineering capability in Auckland. A Google senior manager responsible for cloud has recently relocated to New Zealand, he has publicly argued against any more substantial data centre investment here.</p> <p>s9(2)(g)(i)</p> |
| Relevant background information about the host organisation | <p>This event is to open Google's first national Office in NZ. As well as around 50 existing Google staff this will, over time, employ around 10-12 engineers.</p> <p>At the event Google will announce \$300k of funding to three local groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ NZD\$100,000 for Manaiakalani Education's Digital Fluency Intensive to help teachers develop digital skills, with a focus on teachers from schools in deciles 1-3 across NZ.○ NZD\$100,000 for SeniorNet to empower 100 senior volunteer trainers through capacity-building workshops who will upskill 10,000 senior learners in essential digital literacy skills such as media literacy and online safety.○ NZD\$100,000 for Netsafe's online safety programmes to help children and young people stay safe online. <p>Google is a member of the Digital Boost Alliance, a partnership programme supported by MBIE to improve NZs digital economy.</p> <p>Google provides a wide range of computing and cloud services to New Zealand enterprises and consumers.</p> <p>Google and its YouTube subsidiary are Christchurch Call supporters.</p> |
| Risks to consider Are there any risks that should be considered | <p>s9(2)(g)(i)</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| when deciding if the PM should attend this event? This includes political, media and host organisation risks | |
| Benefits of the Prime Minister attending e.g. who she will meet, who the audience will be, what they will want to talk to her about, will this be a good forum for her to discuss her priorities, background to the organisation etc. | <p>There would be a small benefit in supporting the \$300k of grants being announced and the 10-12 engineering jobs that will be established over time.</p> <p>Attendance might be regarded as useful in work with Google on the Christchurch Call, s9(2)(g)(i)</p> <p>s9(2)(g)(i)</p> |
| Does this fit with the Governments priorities, and if so how? | The event would be seen to support government priorities to improve the digital economy (through the establishment of a New Zealand office for a significant international company). |
| What media opportunities could this invite provide? | As this is the first Google office to open in New Zealand, and Google is delivering a significant communications and marketing effort, it is likely to attract some positive media attention along with the grants being made. |
| Additional Ministry/Department comments | If it is decided not to attend, this might be worth referring to the Minister for Digital Economy and Communications. |
| Political advice from relevant Minister's Advisor and/or Press Secretary | |

Subject Line with Brad Smith

PODCAST OVERVIEW

Released under the Official Information Act 1982



Sometimes, your world can change with a *ping*.

It's that email or text or tweet that signals something major is happening, and you're in the middle of it.

Subject Line, a forthcoming podcast from Microsoft President Brad Smith, explores the moments when some of the biggest issues of our time arrived in the inboxes of our guests, thrusting them into the center.

It's a current-events podcast covering the nexus of technology, policy, and culture. But by rooting our conversations in key moments from our guests' histories, we won't just talk about big issues – we'll give listeners a peek behind the scenes, making topics like privacy, national security, climate change, and free speech more personal, nuanced, and exciting for a broad audience.

Nuts & bolts

- Launch date: September 2021
- First season scope: 12 episodes, released week by week
- Episode length: 30 minutes
- Format: Conversational interviews, one guest per episode
- Where you'll find us: All major podcast platforms

Process for guests

1. Confirm your topic

Emails, texts, tweets, cables, telegrams, smoke signals, pigeon posts – format matters less than what was communicated, where you were when you read it, and what happened next. Our producers will help you and your team prepare, and we'll follow up with an interview guide compiling our research and discussion points.

2. One hour for remote recording

We'll reach out with specific availabilities in July 2021 but will work to accommodate your schedule. You don't need much tech to join the interview, and we'll make sure you're all set ahead of time.

3. Take a listen!

If we have questions as we're editing, we may be in touch. But at latest, we'll send through your episode edit for review, along with materials to help you promote the podcast through your channels.

Thank you.

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

20th of July 2021

Attention of

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern

Prime Minister of New Zealand

Subject: Takeaways from virtual visit to Aotearoa New Zealand

Kei te rangatira, tēnā koe Prime Minister,

It was an honour to virtually meet you at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Live for Business event. We are proud to be part of New Zealand's endeavours to reinvent public diplomacy, as well as to join a policy dialogue with key industry leaders about the future of the APEC economy.

Taking note of your interest in my subsequent virtual visit to Aotearoa, after talking to many New Zealand businesses, societal and government leaders, I thought it was worth sharing a few takeaways and observations.

Key takeaways from the visit to New Zealand

First and foremost, every time I engage with New Zealand, I am struck by the country's diversity, which is reflected in the wide variety of perspectives from all the people I am lucky enough to talk with.

To my mind, New Zealand is an impressive nation that is not only rich in culture but also wise in its careful preservation and celebration of its many diverse voices. In particular, I was humbled to speak with Kiingi Tūheitia, as part of our dialogue with Waikato Tainui. I was impressed by how energised Māori are about the opportunities offered by the digital revolution.

A critical element of the discussion was around the core notion of *trust* and the important role all parties play in fostering it. I noted that Māori believe the Crown and technology providers, as well as their own people, need to work together to establish a trusted data environment so that people can thrive in a digitized world. Microsoft is committed to continue bringing best data governance practices as well as state-of-the-art technology expertise to help address this challenge.

When I reflect on the lessons learnt from New Zealand's business and government leaders, there were a few key themes present in all the discussions: *sustainability, cybersecurity, skilling, and bringing homegrown NZ innovation to the world.*

All organisations are aware of the challenges posed by climate change and are keen to explore together how we may innovate jointly in this space. This is a collective challenge that will only be met by collective action, so it is encouraging to see so many companies and organisations striving to find solutions together.

Many organisations are equally concerned about cyberthreats, and I see serious commitment among C-level executives in NZ to secure their businesses. These organisations recognise that security and trust go hand in hand and are critical to the success of business and NZ as a whole. It is equally a priority area for Microsoft, and we recognize the unique role we have to play here – for instance leveraging our global threat intelligence to protect NZ organisations from sophisticated malicious actors, whether cyber criminals or those, which we believe are state-sponsored.

I spoke with both Kiwi companies from traditional digital industries as well as those from other sectors, not immediately associated with digital services. Though different in many ways, they shared one thing in common – they are all developing digital services that will form a large part of NZ's economy in the future and, ultimately, strengthen exports to diverse global markets. We see those NZ "digital natives" building services on top of our cloud platform and will leverage our toolkit to help them succeed both domestically and internationally.

Noteworthy, both our NZ customers and our NZ partners from the ICT industry consistently highlighted the shortage of skilled labour - it is perhaps one factor that may slow down NZ's economic growth, in particular the promising exports of "weightless" digital services. On our part, we are making substantial investments in digital skills skilling in NZ and will continue to do so with our partners across the Government, industry and non-profits, reaching equally those from underprivileged communities.

Finally, I am very pleased that all leaders seemed enthusiastic about the opportunities our investment in a new datacentre region in New Zealand will bring – and so are we.

Human connections in a disrupted world

It is fascinating that in a world disrupted by the global pandemic, which prompted you to tightly control NZ's borders to protect human health and the quality of life Kiwis continue to enjoy, one can have a very engaging virtual visit to your country with great learnings and knowledge transfer across virtual borders.

While, regrettably, I did not have a chance to enjoy that famous Wellington coffee or bring back home some Manuka honey, I don't feel the dialogues we had were any less meaningful. We were able to connect, exchange thoughts, and build relationships that shall be valuable to all our organisations. I must say, I am also incredibly proud of our strong team in Aotearoa New Zealand that gets to assist your country every day in its impressive digital transformation journey.



Our team was honoured to support the APEC Informal Leaders' Retreat you chaired, leveraging Microsoft's virtual meeting platform, Teams. It was a clear testament to how it is possible to balance the need for human connection with technology through a hybrid experience. This can serve as the way forward to continue the important work of APEC while building relationships for future in-person engagements.

I am sincerely looking forward to the next opportunity for engagement with you and your team – whether virtually or in person. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to reach out to us anytime if we may be of any help.

Ngā mihi,

s9(2)(a)



Ahmed Mazhari

President, Microsoft Asia

CC:

s9(2)(a), Microsoft New Zealand Country Manager

s9(2)(a), Government Affairs Lead



PRIME MINISTER
TE PIRIMIA

Ahmed Mazhari
President
Microsoft Asia
SINGAPORE

8 SEP 2021

Dear Mr Mazhari

It was a pleasure to meet you on screen during the APEC Live with Business event on 10 June. I appreciate the close cooperation we enjoy with Microsoft in our APEC hosting year, including Microsoft's role as a sponsor and technology provider to the APEC CEO Summit 2021.

Thank you also for sharing the takeaways from your virtual visit to New Zealand in your letter of 20 July, and your compliments and insights into our progress with digitalisation.

You will be interested to know that in the formation of the government late last year, I asked the Minister for the Digital Economy and Communications, Hon Dr David Clark, to lead the development of a Digital Strategy for Aotearoa. I see this Strategy as an important vehicle for the government to consider how we can respond to a number of the issues and opportunities you raised in your letter, including how we can build a strong pipeline of digital skills in the economy that balances growing the domestic workforce and attracting overseas talent.

You will be interested to note that following my conversation with Brad Smith in April, Dr Clark had the pleasure of a conversation with Brad on this in May, which has proved helpful in providing input into the Strategy process.

I look forward to a continuing dialogue with Microsoft on the potential of digital technologies for our future economy.

Yours sincerely

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern
PRIME MINISTER



PRIME MINISTER
TE PIRIMIA

24/06/2022

Brad Smith
President
Microsoft

Dear Brad,

I am writing to convey my sincere thanks to you and the entire Microsoft team that hosted me and my delegation so generously on our trip to Seattle. I particularly want to thank you for making the journey back from Europe to be there during my visit.

Thank you also for bringing together Seattle leaders at the welcome reception hosted by Mayor Harrell. I greatly enjoyed the chance to engage with the Seattle community and to witness at first hand its extraordinary technological achievements. As New Zealand looks to expand its linkages with the Seattle region - people, technology, trade, and investment - it is reassuring to know I can count on you and Microsoft to be a champion for those efforts.

I greatly appreciated the opportunity to discuss in detail the capabilities that could be unlocked by a new data centre region in New Zealand. I am committed to ensuring we realise opportunities for skills development, digital exports, deepening our own technology capability, and realising innovative public good applications for this technology.

Linked to this, it was good to discuss the opportunities inherent in a digital technology partnership between New Zealand and the United States. I was pleased, shortly after our meeting, to work on this with President Biden and to encapsulate the key elements in our Joint Statement. Thank you for your support for this initiative, including your engagement with colleagues in Washington DC. My team will reconnect shortly as we operationalise this.

The insights you shared on disinformation and the ways in which the digital environment is being exploited were very sobering. Our discussion brought home to me the importance of our continued partnership with the private sector and civil society, promoting a free, open, globally connected, and interoperable internet as a force for good. As we work through some of these issues here in New Zealand, I will ask Paul Ash and the team to reach out to you to follow up on specific aspects of this discussion.

The tragic events of Buffalo have underlined a need to redouble our efforts on improving crisis response in the Christchurch Call. I believe the whole Call Community can play a role in addressing gaps in the system, and work is underway to take this forward ahead of our September meeting.

The Buffalo attack also demonstrated again the pressing need to grapple with the underlying causes of radicalisation to violence, addressing online and offline factors. As I outlined during our discussion, and in my speech at Harvard, we have done the initial hard work to establish structures that will enable us to make progress on this.

As we discussed, a top priority now is drawing on those processes to enable us meaningfully to assess the outcomes of algorithms and other automated systems. This includes better understanding the impacts these processes may have on the user environment, the dissemination of terrorist and violent extremist content, and radicalisation of at-risk individuals. I am grateful for the assistance Microsoft has offered in taking that discussion forward and pleased our teams are already at work on developing outcomes for our September meeting.

I am looking forward to seeing you at the Christchurch Call Leaders' Summit later this year where I hope we can continue our conversations, with a strong focus on the future work of the Call.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JA', written over the typed name of Jacinda Ardern.

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern
Prime Minister of New Zealand

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