



Te Kawa Mataaho

Public Service Commission

21 November 2023

9(2)(a) privacy

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Official Information Request

Our Ref: OIA 2023-0255

I refer to your official information request received on 27 October 2023 where you have asked:

“Have the agency or any staff received external or internal instruction, direction or guidance, written or oral, to prepare, develop, review or edit briefings to incoming ministers with a view to removing the use of the word ‘Aotearoa’ or other te Reo Māori? If so, what was the instruction received (either copies of meeting minutes/emails/other document or via a summary of the memory of staff involved in the discussion(s).”

Our response

Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission (the Commission) has not received any external or internal instruction, direction or guidance to prepare, develop, review or edit briefings to incoming ministers with a view of removing the use of the word ‘Aotearoa’ or other te reo Māori.

We are therefore refusing your request for information under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act 1982, on the grounds the information does not exist.

Background information

In the lead-up to the General Election and since, discussions have been had across the Public Service regarding preparation of Briefings to Incoming Ministers, for example, to check references to government policy, uses of phrases or acronyms that may not be familiar to incoming Ministers, and the importance of clarity of language.

Agencies must also take care to avoid anything that would put the Public Service in the middle of political debate, particularly during the pre-election and government formation periods.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact Ministerial.Services@publicservice.govt.nz.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that we intend to publish this letter (with your personal details removed) on the Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission's website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nicky Dirks', with a stylized, cursive script.

Nicky Dirks

Manager – Ministerial and Executive Services
Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission