



28 July 2022

Tēnā koe

On 7 June 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information regarding Taumata Kōrero and Whānau Ora:

- 1) *We are unaware of the other members of this Collective but require the release of all text messages, emails, reports, Minutes of whatsoever nature, as between MSD and any members of that Collective.*
- 2) *Who are the members of this Collective and how were they chosen by MSD*
- 3) *For the avoidance of all doubt, this information relates to Local, regional and National communications.*
- 4) *Over the last three years, what contracts across the whole of the Tamaki Makaurau region, have been provided to what agencies, to deliver Food related supports.*
- 5) *Who were/are those agencies*
- 6) *How were they chosen and by what process*
- 7) *How much funding was delivered to each agency and for what period*
- 8) *How much funding is deployed across your total agency in regard to Emergency Grants and/or other supports (name them) per annum over the last three years, pertaining to food.*
- 9) *How much funding is deployed across your total agency over the last 3 years in Emergency Grants, please advise the amount, the region, the location and the nature of the Emergency Grant.*
- 10) *In terms of question 9 above, what was the ethnicity of the numbers of people provided Emergency Grants over the last 3 years, broken down into the type of grant that was made as well.*
- 11) *In regard to other discretionary allowances that were made over the last 3 years, please name them and break out the delivery of them in*

- regard to National, Regional and Local budgets. Also advise the ethnic makeup of those receiving these alternative grants or supports.*
- 12) Please release all reports, emails, texts, minutes of meeting, that have been generated by the MSD in regard to its relationship with the Whanau Ora Commissioning Agency. Whanau Ora has been in existence by way of a policy adopted by the Crown since 2014.*
 - 13) Please provide an annualised release of the above documentation, so we as a people, can have a better understanding of the way in which officials think about us, talk about us and have denied any relationship to us.*

Background

The Ministry's co-location approach has expanded over the recent years and a number of collective partners comprising of Māori providers and organisations across the Tāmaki Makaurau region have come together under the collective mana and tapu of 'Taumata Kōrero'.

By co-locating Māori-led services and adopting a service delivery approach based on kawa and tikanga Māori, the Ministry has created opportunities for Ministry and Māori providers to continue to work closely with end-to-end Māori-led programmes and continue building trust and strengthened relationships with Māori providers and whānau, whilst allowing us to reach Māori who otherwise may not have accessed our services.

Leveraging the relationships established with Māori partners and providers, the region has implemented several initiatives, for example, initiatives focussed on rangatahi employment, including delivering employment preparation and placement services within a kaupapa Māori framework, and Wānanga Pūrākau, a programme aimed at building staff cultural competency.

Response

For the sake of clarity, your questions have been grouped as appropriate for response.

- 1) We are unaware of the other members of this Collective but require the release of all text messages, emails, reports, Minutes of whatsoever nature, as between MSD and any members of that Collective.*
- 3) For the avoidance of all doubt, this information relates to Local, regional and National communications.*

On 16 June 2022, the Ministry attempted to refine this part of your request with you as completing this part of your request without refinement would likely require substantial manual collation. Your request has been granted by

providing you with a summary of the relevant documents as enabled by section 16(1)(e) of the Act. This has been done to ensure the efficient administration of the Ministry continues, whilst also ensuring sufficient information is provided to address any transparency and accountability reasons favouring release of the information.

Please find summaries of Taumata Kōrero's interactions with the Ministry's business groups below:

Service Delivery and Māori Communities and Partnerships

A large volume of correspondence has been identified with Taumata Kōrero and the Ministry's Service Delivery and Māori Communities and Partnerships business groups at National Office. The majority of this correspondence consists of emails containing minutes for the regular Taumata Kōrero hui, and updates on agenda items for upcoming hui. The hui minutes include the attendees who were present at each hui, any action points that arose, and notes on what was discussed. The Ministry has also identified that correspondence exists between the Taumata Kōrero Chair and members of the Ministry's leadership team. This correspondence covers a range of details such as the coordination of ZOOM meetings, proposals, reporting, and information on topics of common interest.

As regional points of contact, the Ministry's Regional Commissioners also hold a very large volume of correspondence with Taumata Kōrero on a number of discussion and operational topics. Some current discussion topics are kai sovereignty, COVID-19 protection framework, housing, expansion of community connector service, the newly introduced school attendance engagement strategy by the Ministry of Education to re-engage tamariki and rangatahi back into schools, and Ministry of Social Development's operational updates.

During the lockdown period, the Ministry's Regional Commissioners for the Tāmaki Makaurau region stood up a 'virtual kanohi te kanohi' discussion with Taumata Kōrero partners every second day to stay connected and support the needs of our partners on the frontlines. As the COVID-19 situation has stabilised, the frequency of Taumata Kōrero hui has now changed to twice a week. Minutes are drafted at each hui for record keeping purposes. The Ministry has been drafting the minutes since October 2021. Over and above the virtual meetings and minutes, email and mobile/telephone communication as required, are used to correspond.

Strategy and Insights

The Ministry's Strategy and Insights Business Group has primarily engaged with Taumata Kōrero in the Ministry-led Social Sector Commissioning work and the development of the COVID-19 Care in the Community response.

For more information on the Ministry's Social Sector Commissioning work, please find the following link: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/planning-strategy/social-sector-commissioning/index.html

- 2) *Who are the members of this Collective and how were they chosen by MSD*

The Ministry played no part in selecting the members of Taumata Kōrero and has no control or influence over the membership or selection. In order to maintain this relationship, the members of Taumata Kōrero are withheld under section 9(2)(ba)(ii) of the Act as this information is subject to an obligation of confidence. If released, this would likely prejudice the public interest in the Ministry being able to engage with Taumata Kōrero in the manner it currently does.

If you have any questions regarding the membership or selection of Taumata Kōrero, please contact them directly for clarification.

- 4) *Over the last three years, what contracts across the whole of the Tamaki Makaurau region, have been provided to what agencies, to deliver Food related supports.*
- 5) *Who were/are those agencies*
- 6) *How were they chosen and by what process*
- 7) *How much funding was delivered to each agency and for what period*

The Ministry's Food Secure Communities team is responsible for supporting communities to become food secure while addressing additional demand on foodbanks, food rescue and other community food services following COVID-19.

The Ministry publishes information regarding the Food Secure Communities Programme on our website. For your reference, please find the following links:

- Food Secure Communities Programme Overview:
 - www.msd.govt.nz/what-we-can-do/community/food-secure-communities/funding-for-community-food-providers.html
- Community Food Transition Grants:
 - www.msd.govt.nz/what-we-can-do/community/food-secure-communities/community-food-transition-grants.html
- Community Food Response Funding:
 - www.msd.govt.nz/what-we-can-do/community/food-secure-communities/community-food-response-funding.html
- Food Secure Communities Grants:

- www.msd.govt.nz/what-we-can-do/community/food-secure-communities/food-secure-communities-grant-funding.html
 - Food Secure Communities Implementation Fund:
 - www.msd.govt.nz/what-we-can-do/community/food-secure-communities/implementation-fund.html
 - Care in the Community welfare response:
 - www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/covid-19/care-in-the-community-welfare-response/find-a-provider.html
 - www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/covid-19/care-in-the-community-welfare-response/funding-care-community/funding-allocation-details.html
- 8) *How much funding is deployed across your total agency in regard to Emergency Grants and/or other supports (name them) per annum over the last three years, pertaining to food.*
- 9) *How much funding is deployed across your total agency over the last 3 years in Emergency Grants, please advise the amount, the region, the location and the nature of the Emergency Grant.*
- 10) *In terms of question 9 above, what was the ethnicity of the numbers of people provided Emergency Grants over the last 3 years, broken down into the type of grant that was made as well.*

The Ministry has interpreted your request for Emergency Grants to mean Hardship Assistance. Hardship assistance is for people with insufficient income and assets, and who have immediate and specific needs that cannot be met by their own resources. Hardship assistance includes Special Needs Grant (SNG), Advance Payment of Benefit (ADV), and Recoverable Assistance Payment (RAP).

More information on hardship assistance can be found at the following links:

- SNG: www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/special-need-s-grant.html.
- ADV: www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/advance-payment-of-benefit.html.
- RAP: www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/recoverable-assistance-payment-grant.html.

Please find in the attached Excel spreadsheet the following Tables:

- **Table One:** The number of Special Needs Grants for reason 'Food' and amounts granted during the period 01 April 2019 to 31 March 2022 broken down by MSD Region and quarter.

- **Table Two:** The total amounts granted for Emergency Grants during the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2022 broken down by Region, Grant Type, and quarter.
- **Table Three:** The total amounts granted for Emergency Grants during the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2022 broken down by Region, Grant Reason, and quarter.
- **Table Four:** The number of Emergency Grants during the period 01 April 2019 to 31 March 2022 broken down by MSD Region, ethnicity, and quarter.

11) *In regard to other discretionary allowances that were made over the last 3 years, please name them and break out the delivery of them in regard to National, Regional and Local budgets. Also advise the ethnic makeup of those receiving these alternative grants or supports.*

The Ministry is interpreting your request to mean discretionary funding granted to Community Connectors.

As part of the response and recovery plan for COVID-19, the Ministry invested in Community Connector positions to provide connections and direct support to people so they can access information and services in the community.

For more information on the Community Connection Service, including a list of providers currently delivering the Community Connection Service, please find the following link: www.msd.govt.nz/what-we-can-do/community/community-connection-service/index.html.

In the years 2020 to 2022, the Ministry spent \$49.4 million on Discretionary Funding for Community Connectors. Please find the regional breakdown in the Table below:

MSD Region	Total Funding
Northland	\$4,344,068.00
Auckland	\$16,848,561.60
Waikato	\$3,760,185.60
BOP	\$4,237,352.80
East Coast	\$3,197,038.40
Taranaki	\$3,223,408.80
Central	\$2,956,724.00
Wellington	\$2,377,688.80
Nelson	\$2,096,394.40
Canterbury	\$3,144,249.00
Southern	\$3,257,084.00

The Ministry is unable to provide a breakdown by local budgets, nor the ethnicity of the recipients of the Discretionary Funding.

The ethnicity of the individual recipients of Discretionary Funding is not required reporting for Ministry providers. As such, I am refusing your request under section 18(g) of the Act as the information you have requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation.

On the occasion that this information is voluntarily provided, this information would be held on individual provider files. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review a substantial number of files. As such, I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Act.

Local information on Community Connectors is also held on individual files. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review a substantial number of files. As such, I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Act.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

12) Please release all reports, emails, texts, minutes of meeting, that have been generated by the MSD in regard to its relationship with the Whanau Ora Commissioning Agency. Whanau Ora has been in existence by way of a policy adopted by the Crown since 2014.

On 16 June 2022, the Ministry attempted to refine this part of your request with you as completing this part of your request without refinement would likely require substantial manual collation. Your request has been granted by providing you with a summary of the relevant documents as enabled by section 16(1)(e) of the Act. This has been done to ensure the efficient administration of the Ministry continues, whilst also ensuring sufficient information is provided to address any transparency and accountability reasons favouring release of the information.

In order to provide all correspondence, substantial manual collation would be required to locate and prepare all documents within scope of your request. As such, I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Act.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

Please find a summary of work related to Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency's relationship with the Ministry:

The Ministry's Leadership Team has been looking into how we can effectively meet the information needs of Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency. This work is currently ongoing and will be shared in due course.

A large volume of internal correspondence has also been identified regarding cross-agency policy development of the COVID Protection Framework, Community Connection Service and Care in the Community model. This includes references to the current and/or possible role/s of Whānau Ora (and other organisations and agencies) in the provision of welfare services in response to COVID-19. The correspondence generally relates to the drafting of documents such as Cabinet Papers and Aide-Memoires. Five papers have been identified to be in scope of your request below.

Please find attached the following two documents:

- *REP/22/2/052 - Aide-memoire: COVID-19 Response: Supporting Māori Whānau And Community Responses to Omicron [oral item]*, dated 7 February 2022.
- *REP/22/2/095 - Aide-memoire: Revised Care in the Community - Welfare Response to Omicron*, dated 16 February 2022.

You will note that information regarding some individuals is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act in order to protect the privacy of natural persons. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information.

The remaining three papers in scope of your request have been proactively released and are publicly available at the following links:

- *COVID-19: A whole of system welfare approach under the COVID-19 Protection Framework*, dated 21 February 2022
 - www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/information-releases/cabinet-papers/2022/system-welfare-approach-under-the-covid-19-protection-framework.html
- *Care in the Community: Welfare Response to Omicron*, dated 7 April 2022
 - www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/information-releases/cabinet-papers/2022/welfare-response-to-omicron.html
- *Care in the Community welfare response after the peak of Omicron*, dated 13 June 2022

- www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/information-releases/cabinet-papers/2022/care-in-the-community.html

13) *Please provide an annualised release of the above documentation, so we as a people, can have a better understanding of the way in which officials think about us, talk about us and have denied any relationship to us.*

Your request for future information cannot be fulfilled as the Ministry does not yet hold this information. As such, your request for an annualised release of the above information is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as this information does not exist. I invite you to make your request again in 2023 for the previous year's information should you still require it at that time.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter and attachments on the Ministry's website. Your personal details will be deleted, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding Taumata Kōrero, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui



Serena Curtis
Acting Deputy Chief Executive
Māori Communities and Partnerships