



17 October 2023

Tēnā koe

On 19 September 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), information regarding waiata sessions:

1. *Can any member of staff participate in Waiata sessions?*
2. *Is participation voluntary or mandatory?*
3. *Approximately how many staff members usually participate in each session?*
4. *Are Waiata sessions held during regular office hours?*
5. *If so, do these sessions count towards a staff member's contracted hours?*
6. *How long does each Waiata session typically last?*
7. *What are the associated costs to the Ministry for holding Waiata sessions? Please include any external resources, venues or other associated costs*
8. *What are the stated purposes or objectives behind holding Waiata sessions?*
9. *How do these sessions contribute to the Ministry's broader goals or strategic directives/ initiatives?*
10. *Is there any feedback mechanism in place for staff to provide their opinions or suggestions regarding the Waiata sessions?*
11. *Have there been any evaluations or assessments of the impact or effectiveness of these sessions?*
12. *Are there any staff members with specific qualifications or expertise who lead or facilitate these sessions?*
13. *If external experts or facilitators are brought in, what are the associated costs?*
14. *How often are these sessions held (e.g. daily, weekly, monthly)?*
15. *Are there any materials or resources provided to staff for these sessions (provide internal copies of Waiata)*
16. *If so, what is the cost associated with these resources (one-off or regular)*
17. *The date of the meeting*
18. *The number of people who attended*
19. *The departments represented at the meeting*
20. *Kindly also indicate the duration of each of these meetings*

21. If possible, I would also appreciate any additional details that can be shared about the objectives or outcomes of these meetings.

The Ministry has 11 regions and over 140 service centres throughout New Zealand. Each service centre may have or hold their own waiata sessions or similar. In order to provide you with this information, the Ministry would need to divert personnel from their core duties and allocate extra time to complete this task. The diversion of these resources would impair the Ministry's ability to continue standard operations at our regional offices and would be an inefficient use of the Ministry's resources.

As such, I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service. I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your requests 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.

That being said, I am able to respond to your query regarding the waiata sessions at National Office. At National Office, waiata encourages staff to build understanding, capability, and participation in Te Ao Māori. Participating in waiata is voluntary and a component of wider learning.

Waiata is open to everyone and the sessions are normally held on a weekly basis for an hour during usual business hours. Other than time of attendees, there are no Ministry resources allocated to support these sessions. The Ministry does not use external tutors to take waiata sessions, and there are staff members who lead or facilitate these sessions. The number of the attendees varies from week to week. As these sessions are staff-led, the Ministry does not collect formal feedback through evaluations.

It is important to note, waiata practice has a strong alignment to Te Pae Tata – the Ministry's Māori Strategy and Action Plan. Further information about Te Pae Tata can be found here: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/about-msd/strategies/te-pae-tata/index.html.

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 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 waiata sessions at National Office, 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



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