



27 September 2024

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 7 August 2024, requesting emails between Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children (OT) and the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) about military-style academies, and any Ministry feedback on Cabinet papers about the military-style academies and the youth serious offender category.

On 22 August 2024, the Ministry transferred the following part of your request to OT as this information was believed to be more closely associated with the functions of OT:

I write to request that you please supply the following information under the Official Information Act about the military-style academies and youth serious offenders:

- *email communications between Oranga Tamariki and Ministry of Social Development staff,*

I have considered the remaining part of your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

Please see the attached **Appendix One** which provides feedback from the Ministry to the office of the Minister for Youth on two papers that are within scope of your request.¹

Some information is withheld under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials. The release of this information is likely to prejudice the ability of government to consider advice and the wider public interest of effective government would not be served.

You did not request staff names and contact details. For this reason, that information has been redacted as out of scope of your request.

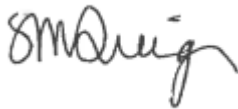
I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

¹ Please note that the information retrieved is as at 7 August 2024.

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 my decision on your request, 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

pp. 

Magnus O'Neill
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services

From: MYD_MinServices (MSD)
To: Out of scope @parliament.govt.nz
Cc: Out of scope MCP_DCE_Office (MSD); i_request (MSD); Out of scope Out of scope
Subject: RE: [YOUTH] Ministerial Consultation: Young serious offender declaration and military-style academies and the military-style academy pilot - Due EOD Monday 13 May
Date: Tuesday, 14 May 2024 9:41:24 am
Attachments: Ministerial Consultation - Young serious offender declaration and military-style academies and the military-style academy pilot.docx

IN-CONFIDENCE

Mōrena Out of scope,

As requested, please find Youth officials' comments in the attached word document.

Ngā mihi,

From: Out of scope @parliament.govt.nz>

Sent: Tuesday, May 7, 2024 8:52 AM

To: Out of scope @msd.govt.nz>; Out of scope @msd.govt.nz>;

MYD_MinServices (MSD) <MYD_MinServices@msd.govt.nz>

Cc: Out of scope @msd.govt.nz>; Out of scope @msd.govt.nz>; Out of scope

Out of scope @msd.govt.nz>; Out of scope @msd.govt.nz>; MCP_DCE_Office (MSD)

Out of scope @msd.govt.nz>; i_request (MSD) Out of scope @msd.govt.nz>

Subject: [YOUTH] Ministerial Consultation: Young serious offender declaration and military-style academies and the military-style academy pilot - Due EOD Monday 13 May

Kia ora Out of scope and MYD

A request for feedback on two papers out for ministerial consultation below please

Deadline	EOD Monday 13 May
Primary	Policy, MYD to support
Context	Attached are two papers circulating for ministerial consultation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Young serious offender declaration and military-style academies• Military-style academy pilot – the approach These are companion papers – the first seeks Cabinet approval for the legislation required to establish a Young Serious Offender Category and making Youth Military-Style Academies a sentencing option. The second paper is a noting paper informing Cabinet of the pilot of the Military-Style Academy which is due to commence mid this year.
Query	Please provide any feedback or advice on these papers to support the Minister to speak to them at Cabinet.
Response	
Notes	

Thanks heaps team!

Ngā mihi

Out of scope



Out of scope

Minister for ACC, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Tourism and Hospitality, Minister for Youth, Associate Minister of Health and Associate Minister of Transport

M: Out of scope
Email: Out of scope @parliament.govt.nz Website: www.Beehive.govt.nz
Private bag 16041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

Ministerial Consultation: Young serious offender declaration and military-style academies and the military-style academy pilot

Young serious offender declaration and military-style academies

1./ The paper is seeking Cabinet's agreement to amend legislation to establish a Young Serious Offender (YSO) declaration, and to establish future legislative settings for Military-Style Academies to crack down on serious youth offending and achieve the Prime Minister's target for reducing youth offending by 15 per cent by June 2029.

2./ The paper recognises the proposals are targeted at a small cohort of young people who are responsible for committing a high volume of serious offences. These young people are likely to have multiple and complex needs, which require intensive and sustained interventions that address the underlying factors that contribute to serious offending behaviour.

3./ The threshold for a young person, aged 14-17 years, to be declared a young serious offender (i.e., two proven and/or admitted eligible offences and likeliness to re-offend, and that previous interventions have been unsuccessful) is likely to be considered reasonable by the courts and general New Zealand public.

4./ Modelling suggests 80-85 percent of young people eligible to receive a YSO declaration are likely to be rangatahi Māori. There may be benefits to be gained from considering mātauranga Māori and/or Māori models of wellbeing¹ to further inform the proposed responses for a YSO, such as the Youth Military Academies sentencing option.

9(2)(f)(iv)



6./ The paper also does reference how the safety of young women or gender-diverse young people may be protected (if at all) through the legislative framework. This is notable as the pilot has had to be restricted to applying to young men due to safety concerns.

Military-style academy pilot – the approach

1./ The paper provides information on the high-level design of the military-style academy pilot (the pilot) that will commence in July 2024.

2./ A cross agency co-design process led by Oranga Tamariki is being used to develop the pilot. This pilot will incorporate key lessons from other military style programmes in New Zealand and internationally. Previous experiences and learnings from culturally focused programmes would also be important for the NZ context.

¹ Evaluation of Whakamana Tangata: Enriching the Culture of Youth Justice Residences September 2021. (Provides an insight into evidence about the benefits of Whakamana Tangata for kaimahi and indicative evidence of the benefits for rangatahi, page 8).

3./ The paper indicates the learnings from the previous New Zealand based Military-style Activity Camp (MAC) Programme, completed in September 2013, will be incorporated into the pilot.

4./ During the transition to community phase, there is an option proposed for rangatahi Māori which incorporates marae-based transition plans developed with input and support from whānau, community, and iwi to be made available if they choose to take this up. The overall pilot programme is likely to be enhanced if consideration is given to developing culturally appropriate mentors to support the community and transition phases of the pilot².

5./ The paper does not provide detail of how youth sector experts would be involved in the codesign process. Addressing this could support the design and future success of the proposed Military-style Academies.

Background Information

1./ In early 2024, as the Minister for Youth, you received information from the youth sector (Ara Taiohi Incorporated and the Billy Graham Youth Foundation) indicating the importance of having a therapeutic component to Youth Military Academies; this view was supported by a literature review prepared by Impact Lab.

2./ The literature review on Military-style Academies suggests they can be effective at reducing the rate of reoffending. This finding is supported by the evaluation of the New Zealand based Military-style Activity Camp (MAC) Programme, completed in September 2013.

3./ The MAC evaluation found that the MAC residential programme improved the attitudes and motivation of the participants to address their offending behaviour. MAC participants were able to achieve some qualifications.

4./ However the MAC evaluation suggested a range of improvements to strengthen the approach, including:

- Improving the selection and referral process, including applying the selection criteria consistently.
- Improving the residential phase of the programme, including improved flow of information between all parties involved in the programme and the life of the young person.
- Improving the transition to the community has some areas for improvement.

5./ The Youth Sector has a range of experienced and expert youth development practitioners who could look to support a co-design process to ensure the proposed Military-style Academies have the best chance of success.

² Examining the Cultural Context of Youth Mentoring: A Systematic Review