MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

7 August 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your emails of 1 and 9 June 2025, requesting copies of all internal MSD documents and communications from 1 September 2024 to 30 May 2025 referencing the New Zealand Collective of Abused in State Care (NZCAST).

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on each part of your request set out separately below.

On 1 June 2025, you requested:

All internal and external correspondence, including emails, memos, meeting notes, and briefings from 1 January 2024 to today, held by MSD that refer to the New Zealand Collective of Abused in State Care (NZCAST) or survivor-led wānanga.

This includes:

- *Discussions referencing NZCAST, where NZCAST was not directly included*
- *Internal documents or staff advice relating to NZCAST's events, advocacy, or media engagement*
- *Communications regarding NZCAST's involvement in survivor-related issues (e.g., benefits, disability entitlements, historic claims)*
- *Media or stakeholder management planning involving NZCAST*

Please provide this in electronic format. If the request is too broad under section 18(f), please advise how it may be refined.

On 9 June 2025, the Ministry contacted you and advised the above request was broad in scope and was likely to be refused under section 18(f) of the Act as substantial manual collation would be required to provide the information requested. We suggested a refinement that would have enabled us to provide the information you seek. However, you responded and requested:

1. *We request copies of all internal MSD documents and communications from 1 September 2024 to 30 May 2025 that:*
    a. *Refer to the New Zealand Collective of Abused in State Care (NZCAST)*

   b. *Were not sent to NZCAST or any of its representatives*

2. *Relate to any of the following:*
   a. *NZCAST's advocacy, public statements, events, or media engagement*
   b. *MSD's internal assessments or commentary on NZCAST's role in survivor-related issues (e.g. historic claims, disability entitlements, benefits access)*
   c. *Stakeholder engagement strategies, media or reputational risk planning involving NZCAST*
   d. *Any mention of NZCAST as a source of "risk," "conflict," or "concern"*
3. *Including Briefings, internal memos, meeting minutes, risk assessments, internal email threads (excluding those where NZCAST is a direct recipient), or communications between MSD and other agencies referencing NZCAST*

Thank you for refining your request.

In the interest of good faith as you have sought to refine your request to a more manageable one, I provide a summary as permitted under section 16(1)(e) of the Act, based on discussions with staff known to have been in contact with you:

- We are not aware of any specific internal assessments or commentary on NZCAST's role beyond dealing with the specific requests or communications that are received.
- There are no specific engagement strategies, media or reputational risk planning documents that exist as part of recent communications.
- The generic theme of internal communications has been of how best to support NZCAST because of its enquiries, as evidenced by the typical email trail included with this response that identifies how we attempt to best engage and resolve your requests.

I also attach an example email from Linda Hrstich-Meyer, General Manager Historic Claims, that refers two emails from you on 29 May 2025 to the Historic Claims team and other Ministry staff noting her advice on the way forward.

On the first request about your concerns on benefits, the care system, and Royal Commission findings, this was referred to staff who assisted with the response you received from me dated 11 June 2025. You'll recall that response addressed a wide range of issues you have raised with the Ministry.

Your second email questioned why Historic Claims did not attend your Christchurch meeting. You'll see Linda's advice on the Ministry's approach.

This email is provided as it is both recent and is representative of how the Ministry deals with your correspondence. You will note that some of this information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of natural persons. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in the release of this information.

- **Appendix 1: NZ CAST latest emails, dated 30 May 2025.**

I am aware of one document that has been created because of NZCAST's recent engagement, which is the Crown Redress Travel Policy, which seeks to ensure that Survivors can attend Survivor wānanga and other Survivor events and have

consistent support offerings irrespective of which redress agency the claim is made to. Attached please find:

- **Appendix 2: Travel Policy for Survivors to attend Survivor wānanga and other Survivor events that support wellbeing.**

Your request for all information of this nature is very broad and substantial manual collation would be required to locate and prepare all communications within the Ministry that were not sent to you, within scope of your refined request. 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 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.

You will recall that on 11 June 2025, I wrote to you on behalf of the Ministry's Chief Executive, and provided a detailed response regarding the services the Ministry provides to abuse survivors. Please note that the Government has established the Crown Response Office (CRO) to the Abuse in Care Inquiry, in response to the findings from the Abuse in Care Royal Commission of Inquiry. I strongly recommend that you direct your enquiries to the CRO: contact@abuseinquiryresponse.govt.nz.

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

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

Anna Graham
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services

From:	Linda Hrstich-Meyer
To:	Nadine Kilmister; s9(2)(a)
Cc:	Peter Lowe; Ema Wihapi-Solia; Karen Heine
Subject:	NZ CAST latest emails
Date:	Friday, 30 May 2025 9:53:39 am
Attachments:	image001.png FW .msg image002.jpg

IN-CONFIDENCE

HI everyone

Two emails came from Karl last night.

1. The first one (below) to CEs, Ministers, and various others which focuses mainly on benefits, care system and RC recs. I think the current draft prepared by MAES could either be sent dealing with that latest email or a further letter after the current draft letter goes. See his request below for a national hui with several agencies and a response in 14 days.
2. The attached email questions why HC did not attend the Christchurch meet. I have been told to transfer that to Raj to respond as he attended as the representative for redress agencies. The issue about notifying him about travel paid to claimants we can deal with by explaining that he needs to be an agent or have received consent to obtain that information.

Linda

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Linda Hrstich-Meyer – General Manager | Historic Claims
Phone: s9(2)(a)
Ministry of Social Development, 56 The Terrace Wellington

MSD purpose:
We help New Zealanders to be safe, strong and independent
Manaaki tangata, manaaki whānau

From: Linda Hrstich-Meyer <linda.hrstich-meyer001@msd.govt.nz>
Sent: Friday, May 30, 2025 9:41 AM
To: James Webber <s9(2)(a) >
Subject: FW: Report

Keeping you in the loop (email below and attached).

Linda Hrstich-Meyer – General Manager | Historic Claims
Phone: s9(2)(a)
Ministry of Social Development, 56 The Terrace Wellington

MSD purpose:
We help New Zealanders to be safe, strong and independent
Manaaki tangata, manaaki whānau

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From: JennaFaith Allan <JennaFaith.Allan@education.govt.nz>
Sent: Thursday, May 29, 2025 9:50 PM
To: Linda Hrstich-Meyer <linda.hrstich-meyer001@msd.govt.nz>; delwyn.clement@ot.govt.nz
Subject: FW: Report

Kia ora kōrua

You weren't on the distribution list below but thought you might want to see it.

Linda – was sent to your CE and Minister.

Jenna-Faith Allan | Director | Sensitive Claims Team
Network & Regulatory | Te Pae Aronui
| Mobile s9(2)(a)
National Office 1 The Terrace
education.govt.nz

He mea tārai e mātou te mātauranga kia rangatira ai, kia mana taurite ai ōna huanga
We shape an education system that delivers equitable and excellent outcomes

Te Mahau

From: NZ CAST <NZCAST@outlook.com>
Sent: Thursday, 29 May 2025 9:31 pm
To: Erica Stanford (MIN) <e.stanford@ministers.govt.nz>; Erica Stanford <erica.stanford@parliament.govt.nz>; Stuart Parkinson <stuart.parkinson023@whaikaha.govt.nz>; Paula.Tesoriero@whaikaha.govt.nz;

Paula.Tesoriero@whaikaha.govt.nz; Louise Upston (MIN) <l.upston@ministers.govt.nz>; Louise Upston (MIN) <l.upston@ministers.govt.nz>; Rachel Leota <Rachel.Leota@ot.govt.nz>; Chappie Te Kani <chappie.tekani@ot.govt.nz>; andrew.bridgman@ot.govt.nz; Debbie Power <debbie.power006@msd.govt.nz>; Laura Power <laura.power@acc.co.nz>; Alexia Ford <alexia.ford@acc.co.nz>; JennaFaith Allan <JennaFaith.Allan@education.govt.nz>; Stephanie Ramirez <Stephanie.Ramirez@education.govt.nz>; Ema Wihapi-Solia <ema.wihapisolia002@msd.govt.nz>; Tupua Urlich <tupua.urlich@voyce.org.nz>; Gabriella Guy <gabriella.guy@voyce.org.nz>
Cc: Karl Tauri <pennykarl35@hotmail.com>
Subject: Report

Reporting Period: May - Christchurch Wananga

Introduction

Since 2022, NZCAST has held regional wānanga across Aotearoa, grounded in kaupapa Māori values and survivor-led facilitation. These wānanga provide a safe, culturally anchored space for survivors of abuse in state care to share their experiences, reconnect with identity, and advocate for systemic change.

This report summarises key themes, patterns, and survivor-led recommendations emerging from our gatherings, and provides a stark reminder: survivors are still waiting. Despite the Royal Commission, despite Crown apologies, the harm continues, in policy, in practice, and in the silence of institutions meant to serve us.

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Who we heard from

- Total participants: 167
- Regions: Christchurch with survivors from Southland, Northland, Auckland, Waikato and beyond.
- Demographics:
    - 70% Māori
    - 20% Pākehā
    - 10% Pacific, Rainbow, or disabled communities
- Ages: 3–78
- Experience: All participants were placed in state care between 1950 and 2025 or were children of survivors in care, many with ongoing claims, health or access needs.

Key Themes from Christchurch Wānanga

1. Lack of Trustworthy Case Management

Survivors described inconsistent, inaccessible or absent case managers.

> *"I had a new case manager each time. Every time I had to retell my abuse. I just gave up" - Survivor, Auckland*

> *"No one tells me where my claim is. I'm sick of chasing MSD. They don't care. Look, they couldn't even come." - Survivor, Northland.*

2. Denied Access to Entitlements

People with clear trauma-related disabilities were rejected from Disability Allowance or mental health support.

> *"They said I needed more proof. I was raped in care, and now I can't leave my house often. I try to do things for wellbeing, to make myself better and I'm rejected at every-turn. More evidence, more evidence. I have to spend money just to get the disability allowance, how backwards is that? " - Survivor, Waikato*

> *"I can't afford my medication. ACC rejected me, and MSD just said sorry, we can't do that. They even tried to accuse me of being an alcoholic because I take LDN for chronic pain. It's a well-reserached drug, I walked out in tears" - Survivor, Auckland*

3. Re-Traumatisation by MSD and WINZ

Survivors were re-traumatised by frontline staff who lacked training or empathy.

> *"The staff read off a piece of paper about JobSeeker benefit. I didn't come for a benefit. I came for help." - Survivor, Christchurch*

> *"I asked for a letter from my GP. She rolled her eyes and said it was 'just another form'." - Survivor, Auckland*

4. Systemic Silence and Invisibility

Despite the Royal Commission's work, survivors felt shut out of real decision-making and ignored.

> *"They apologised at Parliament and then disappeared. No case manager, no funding, nothing." - Survivor, Christchurch*

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"They talk about redress, but nothing's changed in my life. It's all just more forms." - Survivor, Northland.

5. Disconnection from Whakapapa and Identity

Survivors consistently speak of being cut off from iwi, land, and whānau and receiving no meaningful support to reconnect.

"I don't know where I come from. MSD took that from me. No one has helped me get it back." - Survivor, Christchurch

"I want to find my whakapapa, but I can't navigate the system. Why isn't anyone helping?" - Survivor, Northland

6. Lack of Counselling and Mental Health Access

Many survivors still cannot access free, ongoing trauma therapy ,despite years of harm and distress.

"My GP said I need counselling but I'm on a benefit. I can't pay $180 a week." - Survivor, Auckland

"They said the counselling is capped. But trauma isn't." - Survivor, Waikato

7. Inappropriate Use of WINZ and Benefit Frameworks

*Support is often delivered through **standard benefit pathways**, which are not designed for survivors and create stigma and retraumatisation.*

" I want support as a survivor, not seen as a bludger."

8. No Dedicated Survivor Pathways or Systems

Despite the scale of abuse and the apology, there is no unified or visible survivor support system across government.

"Everyone says it's not their job. So whose job is it?"
"There should be one place you go. One person who follows you through." - Survivor, Christchurch

9. Shame, Silence, and Institutional Avoidance

Survivors report that shame still dominates Crown responses. Agencies avoid direct engagement, sideline survivor voice, or focus on optics over action.

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"They invited us to the apology but didn't turn up to our wānanga." - Survivor, Chirstchurch
"They only show up when media are watching." - Survivor, Christchurch

Pattern Analysis

Across all sessions, common systemic patterns emerged:

Pattern	Impact
Absence of dedicated case management	Fragmented care, trauma repetition
Rigid and demeaning disability access processes	Denial of support, survivor exhaustion
Tokenistic agency attendance at events (or non attendance)	Breakdown of trust and engagement
Constant referral to CRU instead of MSD (or agency) responsibility	No resolution, deflection of accountability
Budget prioritisation over healing	Survivor needs sidelined, retraumatisation
Cultural incompetence and racial bias	Further marginalisation of Māori and Pacific survivors

Alignment with the Royal Commission

Our findings which are from our christchurch wananga alone, strongly reflect those of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care, particularly in the 2024 final report *Whanaketia: From Darkness to Light*, which called for:

- Independent oversight of redress processes
- Culturally grounded, survivor-led support systems
- Restorative approaches, not bureaucratic delays
- Respect for the mana and lived experience of survivors

NZCAST has not seen these principles meaningfully implemented by MSD, Oranga Tamariki, or any national agency.

Survivor-Led Recommendations

These recommendations have been raised consistently at all NZCAST wānanga:

1. Permanent, trauma-informed case managers for survivors across regions

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2. Automatic access to the Disability Allowance for survivors with trauma-related conditions
3. Guaranteed MSD and other agency attendance at survivor events with trained staff
4. Dedicated hui with ministers and CE-level officials every quarter
5. Establishment of a survivor-led advisory group to review MSD and OT responses in particular.
6. Cultural safety and trauma training for all public-facing staff, co-delivered by survivors
7. Funding for survivor-led organisations to lead peer support, wānanga, and systemic input
8. No more referrals to CRU for matters under an agencies responsiblity.

Next Steps

We are sharing this report with:

- Minister Erica Stanford, Minister for the Crown Response to the Royal Commission
- Minister Louise Upston, Minister for Social Development
- Debbie Power, Chief Executive of MSD
- Whaikaha, Oranga Tamariki, and other relevant agencies
- Select Committees and media organisations

We expect a formal response within 14 working days and request a national hui to address these findings in person.

About NZCAST

The New Zealand Collective of Abused in State Care (NZCAST) is a survivor-led charitable trust committed to the wellbeing, dignity, and justice of state care survivors. Our kaupapa is grounded in wairuatanga, manaakitanga, and system change.

Contact:
Karl,

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Founder, NZCAST
021 207 0587

https://www.nzcast.co.nz/

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Listening, learning, changing
Mā Whakarongo me Ako ka huri te tai
Crown Response to the Abuse in Care Inquiry

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

ORANGA TAMARIKI
Ministry for Children

Ministry of Education
Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga

MINISTRY OF HEALTH
MANATŪ HAUORA

Travel Policy for Survivors to attend Survivor wānanga and other Survivor events that support wellbeing

Policy Number	P.01	Contact	Crown Response Office
Version Number	1.0	Approved Date	16 May 2025
Policy Owner	Chief Executive, Crown Response Office	Due for Revision	

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Background

Redress Agencies, with the exception of Ministry of Health, have some funding to provide support to survivors through the claims process. This funding is to provide support for survivors while they are waiting to have their claim progress and during the claims process. There are some variations between agencies about what supports are available through this funding and how supports are provide. The common support framework, announced by the Minister on Friday 9 May, will address these inconsistencies when it is introduced and ensure that going forward once implemented survivors will have consistent support offerings irrespective of which agency the make their claim too.

In the interim, to ensure consistency in approach Crown Redress agencies will use the same approach when considering requests for funding support to wānanga. This approach applies to requests made direct to redress teams for financial support. In some situations, survivors maybe engaging with and seeking support for travel from other teams within redress agencies. In these cases, the approach outlined below will not apply. Decisions about the provision of travel support in these cases will be made based on the deciding agency polices and approach to managing requests for financial support.

Who is eligible to request travel support from redress agencies:

Funding support will be offered to survivors with open claims with these core Crown Redress agencies as part of the package of supports available for these survivors while they are waiting to have their claim progress and during the claims process. Funding is not available for survivors with closed claims.

How much support could be provided:

Funding to provide supports to survivors is intended to meet a range of support needs including access to counselling or other supports that individual agencies provide to support survivors. Requests for travel support will be considered within this wider context, noting that the level of support that can be provided is constrained by the available funding the agency has available and the funding that a survivor has already received for supports. This means that when considering a request for travel support the agency will need to consider

what funding that individual has already received for support services and/or other support needs that they have identified that require funding. Where the cost of the travel being requested is high Survivors will also need to understand agreement to meet these costs may impact on or prevent the redress agency providing financial support for other support services.

If as part of this wellbeing plan survivors are seeking support for a whanau member to attend with as a support person this request can be considered, noting that there is no additional funding available to meet these costs and this request would be considered within the context of what other supports have been provided or are being requested.

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