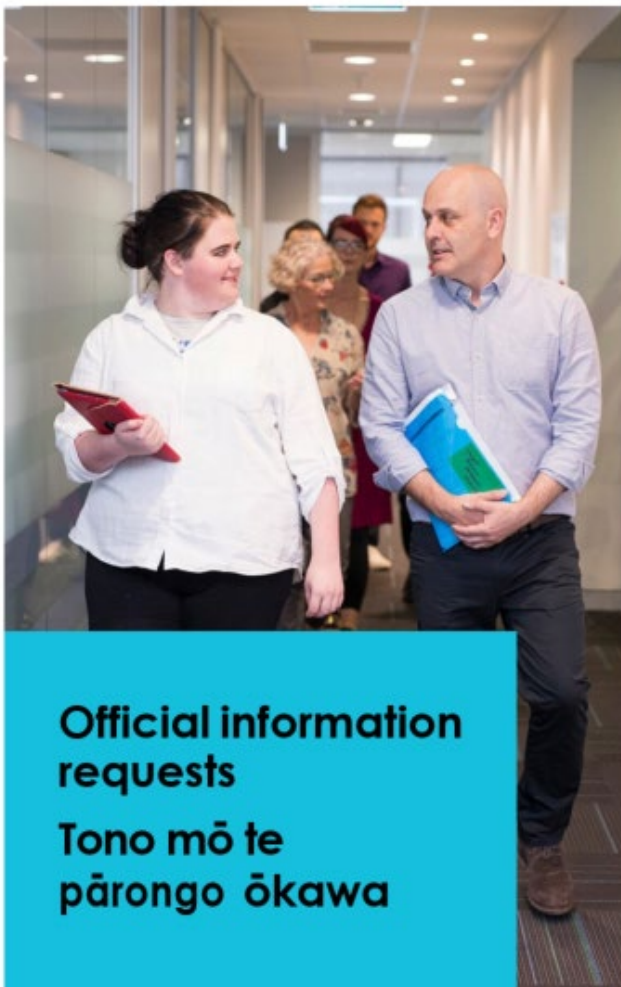




Ombudsman
Tuia kia ōrite • Fairness for all

Large Print version



The Ombudsman is committed to Te Ao Māori and ensuring obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi are met.

They work to protect people's rights, their dignity, and mana.

Requesting information

You can request information from public sector agencies.

Official information laws set out how Ministers and government agencies have to respond to your request.

The Official Information Act (OIA) applies to Ministers and central government agencies.

The Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act (LGOIMA) applies to local government agencies.

What is 'official information'?

Official information is any information held by:

- Ministers
- government departments and ministries
- state-owned enterprises and crown entities
- city, district, or regional councils
- the Police
- school boards, universities, polytechnics, and wānanga
- any other public sector agency subject to the OIA or LGOIMA.

Personal information about yourself is covered by the Privacy Act. Enquiries about the Privacy Act should be made to the Privacy Commissioner on 0800 803 909.

How do you request official information?

Make your request to the agency that holds the information, not the Ombudsman.

It's best to make your request in writing – by email or post or text – so you have a record. You can also ask for information in person or over the phone. However, the agency may ask you to put it in writing.

If you're not sure whether an agency holds the information, call them first. They're required to give you reasonable help to make your request.

Be clear about the information you want so everyone has the same understanding.

You don't have to mention the OIA or LGOIMA when you make your request, but it can help ensure that the right rules are applied.

It's important to keep a copy of your request and make a note of the date you made it.

What happens when you request information?

The agency must reply to your information request as soon as reasonably practicable and no later than 20 working days after receiving it. This time limit may be extended, but the agency must tell you why. You have a right to challenge the extension through the Ombudsman.

You can ask for your request to be treated as urgent, but you must give reasons.

Use the online calculator to find out the latest date for a response to your request: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/

There may be a charge to offset the cost of time spent in providing the information, but it must be reasonable.

If your request is refused, the agency must tell you why and that you can complain to the Ombudsman.

How can the Ombudsman help?

If you don't receive a response within the time limit, or if you are unhappy with an agency's response to your information request, you can complain to the Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman can look at things like:

- refusing to release information
- delaying responses

- charging too much for information
- not providing information in the way you have asked
- not providing information in a way you can understand
- placing conditions or restrictions on use of the information.

The Ombudsman may recommend that the agency releases all or some of the information you requested. In most instances, the agency is then obliged to release the information.

The Ombudsman is independent and impartial when dealing with your complaint. Their services are free.

How to make a complaint

Send your complaint to the Ombudsman by letter, email, or use the online complaint form:

www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/get-help-public

Please provide the Ombudsman with a copy of your written information request, or details of your spoken request, as well as a copy of the agency's response, if available. Say what you are unhappy about.

If you haven't received a reply to your information request, give details of where and when you made it.

What happens when you make your complaint?

The Ombudsman will let you know they have received your complaint and keep you informed during the complaint handling process.

Informal enquiries may be made to deal with your complaint as quickly as possible. The Ombudsman may be able to resolve your complaint without an investigation.

If your complaint is investigated, the Ombudsman will seek an explanation from the agency concerned. If any information has been withheld, the Ombudsman will view it.

The Ombudsman will form an initial, provisional opinion on whether your request should have been refused. If they consider that the agency was entitled to refuse your request, you will have the opportunity to respond before a final opinion is made. Where appropriate, the Ombudsman may make a recommendation to the agency.

The Ombudsman may publish information about the outcome of a complaint if it is important for other people to know about. Your privacy will be protected where necessary.

Contact the Ombudsman Whakapā Kaitiaki

Mana Tangata

Office of the Ombudsman

Tari o te Kaitiaki Mana Tangata

Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.00pm

Freephone 0800 802 602

Email info@ombudsman.parliament.nz

Website www.ombudsman.parliament.nz

PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143

Facebook: @ombudsmannz



www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/resources/official-information-requests

Use this QR code for more information and pamphlets in accessible formats and other languages. Additional languages and formats are available on request.

Use NZ Relay www.nzrelay.co.nz to contact the Ombudsman if you are Deaf or hard of hearing or have a speech impairment.

Official information requests

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