

The OIA and you

Election 2026

Getting it right

September 2026

You can find pre-election OIA guidance on our website.

🌐 www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/election2026

☎ 0800 802 602

@ info@ombudsman.parliament.nz

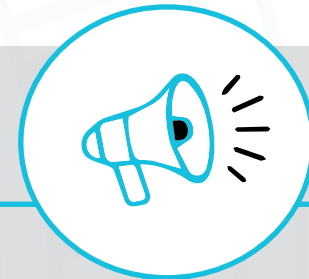


Requesters



- **You can request urgency.** Ask for your request to be prioritised if the information will help people decide who to vote for.
- **Provide context.** Explain why you want the information urgently, to help the agency make a decision on whether your request will be prioritised.
- **Be open to alternatives.** Tell the agency you are open to receiving information in a different way – such as a summary – if it will enable quicker access.
- **Be aware that not all information is official information.** There is a difference between Ministerial official information – which is covered by the OIA – and party campaign information – which generally isn't covered.
- **If something's not right, come to the Ombudsman quickly.** If you're unhappy with the response to your request, go to the Ombudsman as soon as you can, using our [complaint form](#).

Ministers (and agencies)



- **Apply the public interest test.** Consider if there is a public interest in releasing the information to help inform voters ahead of the election
- **Consider proactive release.** Make information available without waiting for requests.
- **Be up front.** Keep the requester informed - and consider requests for urgency properly.
- **Do the right thing.** Don't let politics interfere with your decision-making on official information requests.
- **Avoid any perception of 'gaming' the OIA. Here's how:**
 - » Acknowledge you have received a request – don't ignore it.
 - » Don't prioritise responses just because the request comes from a 'friendly' requester.
 - » Avoid excuses – if the information is ready to be released, then release it. Don't hold up responses unnecessarily, including when sending an FYI for 'no surprises.'
 - » Don't overly rely on information soon being publicly available to refuse requests.
 - » Don't extend the time to decide on the basis that a Minister is not available during the election period. Plan ahead to ensure availability.
 - » Don't transfer requests to someone else to deal with when it should be you making the decision.

Ombudsman



- Agencies and Ministers can expect the Ombudsman to ask: why can't the information be released now? And, is release in the public interest?
- We will prioritise looking into complaints of high public interest and may investigate these urgently. This includes in cases where an agency or Minister's office hasn't yet given a substantive response to the requester.
- The Ombudsman will expect agencies to prioritise providing responses as soon as reasonably practicable when there is a delay complaint.

 **Ombudsman**
Kaitiaki Mana Tangata