

7 July 2023

Sue Boyde  
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Tēnā koe Sue

***Request for information***

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request of 2 June 2023. You asked for information regarding Julian Batchelor's anti co-governance talk.

My response to each part of your request can be found below.

1. *Given that police were present at the event from the start, was police presence pre-arranged by Greg Rudings?*

Police presence was not pre-arranged. Police responded to a call for assistance by the organisers.

2. *What level of seniority was the police person who arranged for police cover at this event, and what police district did they belong to?*

A Senior Sergeant from the Wellington Police District attended the incident and managed Police staff on the ground at the event.

3. *How many cars and police in total were assigned, and what districts did they come from?*

All police staff who attended this incident were from the Wellington District. 19 Police staff in total and approximately eight Police vehicles were deployed to the incident. Not all Police staff directly attended the location, some were mobile in and around the area in case they were required.

4. *How many police remained in those districts for ordinary policing duties on the evening of 29 May 2023?*

A total of 72 staff continued ordinary policing duties in Wellington District on the evening of 29 May 2023.

**Additional context:**

Police's role is to keep the peace and uphold the law, which includes allowing the exercise of freedom of expression, a right upheld by the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990. In short, people are free to say what they wish, providing it is within the bounds of the law.

Police's role in this varies according to the nature of the location where an event is hosted. At a private venue, lawful occupiers are entitled to exclude who they chose. Where someone is excluded by a lawful occupier and they refuse to leave, police may be called upon under the Trespass Act 1980.

It is not Police's place to form a view on the subject matter of such events. By virtue of the oath we swear, we must maintain a neutral position in how we go about our duties. Here is the constabulary oath which is helpful in understanding our role:

"I swear that I will faithfully and diligently serve His Majesty King Charles the Third, King of New Zealand, his heirs and successors, without favour or affection, malice or ill-will. While a constable I will, to the best of my power, keep the peace and prevent offences against the peace, and will, to the best of my skill and knowledge, perform all the duties of the office of constable according to law. So help me God."

Police's focus is necessarily on maintaining order, safety and allowing the lawful exercise of rights. This is in line with our statutory responsibilities under the Policing Act 2008.

Please note that as part of its commitment to openness and transparency, Police proactively releases some information and documents that may be of interest to the public. An anonymised version of this response may be publicly released on the New Zealand Police website.

Nāku noa, nā

*Tess Keene*

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