

# Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall

Minister of Health  
Minister of Research, Science and Innovation



Mitchell Stevenson  
[fyi-request-23649-525c16f8@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-23649-525c16f8@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Ref: AVOIA2023-237

Tēnā koe Mitchell

## Response to your Request for Official Information

Thank you for your request made on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) for the following:

*Please provide the details that support your assertion in your tweet at 1610hrs on the 31/07/2023 where you said "Pay equity means more money in the pockets of our hardworking nurses. It means we end gender-based pay discrimination and boost our retention of nurses in hospitals. Today we reached a historic milestone. Thank you nurses." where you linked the following press release*

*<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/nurses-accept-pay-equity-offer>*

*Please also disclose all messages whether they be verbal, written, or electronic, between you and any other public service figure that mentions specifically the phrase "gender-based pay discrimination".*

I have considered your request under the Act.

In relation to the first part of your request, please note that while it is possible to seek information by asking questions under the Act, a distinction must be drawn between questions which seek information that is 'held', and questions which seek to elicit an opinion or explanation. The primary purpose of the Act is to allow requesters to seek information 'held' by Ministers or agencies. It is not a mechanism for requesters to seek an explanation or opinion from an Minister or agency. For this reason, I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(g)(i) of the Act.

In relation to the second part of your request, I can advise that I have identified no instances of the specific phrase "gender-based pay discrimination" in text messages or emails with any other public service figure. As such, I am refusing this part of your request under Section 18(g) of the Act, as the information requested does not exist and there is no reason to believe any other entity subject to the Act would hold this information.

Please note that as Minister of Health, I have a very large number of verbal conversations with people in my official capacity. On a topic such of such significance as pay equity, these conversations are numerous to the extent that it is not possible for me to recall whether or when in these conversations, the specific phrase "gender-based pay discrimination" was used, and as such, I am refusing this part of your request under Section 18(e) of the Act.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the Act, to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz) or by calling 0800 802 602.

Naku noa, nā



Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall  
**Minister of Health**