

9 September 2024

Sam H  
[fyi-request-27791-e4913860@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-27791-e4913860@requests.fyi.org.nz)

REF: OIA-15975

Dear Sam

### **Request made under the Official Information Act 1982**

Thank you for your email of 23 July 2024 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

*I request any information regarding decisions related to the continued sale of the new black number plates despite evidence that they are often unreadable.*

*This includes any papers or decision documents presented or generated by or to the executive leadership team or any other decision making or advisory group within the last two years.*

To provide context, black reflectorised plates were tested by NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) and NZ Police between 2020 and 2022. The testing primarily involved assessing readability by cameras used for safety enforcement and tolling.

The plates were approved in 2022 by the Registrar of Motor Vehicles, following Police endorsement, and marketed by Kiwiplates from September 2022.

Concerns about the readability of black plates have subsequently been reported to NZTA by the public and NZ Police. The concerns over visibility are due to the reflective background blending into the same colour as the characters under some lighting conditions.

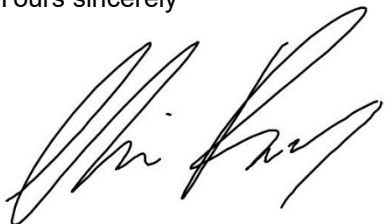
The original black reflectorised plates were approved in accordance with the international number plate design standard and NZTA requirements. The subsequent concerns about readability have highlighted the need for NZTA to influence the content of the international standard and provide further guidance around a testing standard in NZ.

In light of the ongoing work and public interest in black reflectorised plates, NZTA plans to publish information, including decision-making documents, on its website before mid to late November 2024. As the information will soon be publicly available, your request has been refused under section 18(d) of the Act.

Under section 28 of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision to refuse this information. The contact details for the Ombudsman can be located at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz).

If you would like to discuss this reply with NZTA please contact Ministerial Services by email to [official.correspondence@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:official.correspondence@nzta.govt.nz)

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Rodley', written in a cursive style.

**Chris Rodley**

National Manager – Regulatory System Design