



3 December 2024

Ref: DOIA -REQ-0006075

Liam Hehir

Email: fyi-request-29074-4c9f02d3@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Liam

Thank you for your email of 5 November 2024 to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

I am writing to request information under the Official Information Act 1982. My request pertains to the decision made by the Ministry to have staff attend training by The Pākehā Project, a programme that, according to recent media coverage and its own promotional materials, appears to focus on themes that may be perceived as overtly political, particularly concerning decolonisation and systemic change.

Given the principles of political neutrality and stewardship required under the Public Service Act 2020, I am seeking detailed information on the rationale, decision-making, and assessment processes involved. Specifically, I request the following:

Cost and Analysis: The total amount spent by the Ministry on staff attendance at The Pākehā Project, including registration, travel, accommodation, and other expenses. Additionally, any cost-benefit analysis or justification made prior to approving the expenditure.

Effectiveness and Outcomes: Documentation or reports detailing the measurable outcomes or benefits observed following staff participation, along with any evaluations of the programme's success or impact on departmental objectives.

Approval and Decision-Making: The names or titles of officials who authorised the expenditure, along with any records of internal discussions or concerns raised about the appropriateness or potential political nature of the programme.

Political Neutrality: Any steps taken to ensure compliance with the principle of political neutrality, including an assessment of whether the programme's emphasis on decolonization could conflict with public service requirements.

Alternative Options: Records detailing whether any alternative cultural competency training programmes were considered, and the rationale for selecting The Pākehā Project over other available options.

I am particularly interested in understanding how the decision to engage with this programme aligns with public service obligations to remain apolitical while pursuing professional development.



I am writing to advise you that MBIE needs to extend the time available to answer your request by 20 working days. MBIE's response will be sent to you no later than 22 January 2025. Please note that the days from 25 December 2024 to 15 January 2025 (inclusive) are defined as non-working days in the Act and are not counted in the calculation for the response due date.

The reason for the extension is that consultations necessary to make a decision on your request are such that a proper response cannot reasonably be made within the original time limit.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request or this response, or if you require any further assistance, please contact OIA@mbie.govt.nz.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of our decision to extend the time limit. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, connected strokes that form a stylized representation of the name Tony Brown.

Tony Brown
Principal Ministerial Services Advisor
Communications, Design & Ministerial Services