

3 December 2024

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Our ref: OIA 117243

Tēnā koe Liam

Official Information Act request: Expenditure on The Pākehā Project

Thank you for your email of 5 November 2024, requesting under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) information regarding the Pākehā Project. Your request was as follows:

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:

- 1. 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.*
- 2. 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.*
- 3. 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.*
- 4. 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.*
- 5. 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.

The Ministry of Justice is preparing a response to your request. However, due to the need for external consultation, a response cannot be made within the original time limit. Accordingly, I am extending the time limit for response by 20 working days under section 15A of the Act, and will respond to you on, or by 22 January 2024. I apologise for any inconvenience this extension will cause you.

If you require any further information, please contact Media & Social Media Manager Joe Locke at media@justice.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Act. The Office of the Ombudsman may be contacted by email to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phone on 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā



Louise Ainsley
Manager, Ministerial Services