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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 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.

On 3 December 2024, the Ministry informed you that an extension was requested due to the need for external consultation, under section 15A of the Act.

This letter provides you with tranche 1 of 2, which relates to questions 1 to 5 of your request. Tranche 2 will provide you with further information regarding questions 1 and 3, which the Ministry is currently collating.

To provide some context to the Pākehā Project, the Ministry contracted Unity House Limited, trading as the Pākehā Project, in the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years.

Attached are copies of a proposal document and memorandum outlining the background, description of services, and key deliverables from the Pākehā Project. Some information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect personal privacy.

A second proposal and any relevant documents will be included in tranche two and provided as part of the response as soon as practicable.

For ease of reference, we have provided responses to each question, in turn, below.

Question 1: Cost of staff attendance

The Pākehā Project developed training material in 2022/23 for delivery in 2023/24. The Pākehā Project delivered two courses in the 2023/24 financial year:

Course 1: Tiriti Workshops and Coaching – Train the Trainers Programme, with support and supervision provided over 2023/24. This was delivered to two different cohorts with a total of 37 participants from the Ministry's national office. It included:

- development of the peer coach training material and delivery of sessions,
- co-design development and delivery of sessions, and
- supervision over one year.

As noted above, a proposal document and memorandum have been provided in this response, including details of the costs incurred as outlined in the memorandum. A second proposal and any relevant documents will be included in tranche two, which will also provide additional information, including a breakdown of the total amount spent.

Course 2: Leadership coaching tools, practices and principles, and support in times of difficulty, stress, and change. This was delivered to 11 leaders over two sessions. The Ministry paid \$6,900 (excluding GST) to the Pākehā Project in 2023/24 to design and deliver the two half-day, interactive sessions for the Ministry's Ātea a Rangi Leadership Team.

Please note that no courses were delivered in 2022/23. Details regarding the decision to engage the Pākehā Project, along with further cost-related information can be found on page 2 of the memorandum in the attached document pack attached.

Questions 2, 3 and 4: effectiveness and outcomes, approval and decision-making and political neutrality

In response to parts 2 and 3 of your request, please refer to the attached document pack. Additional information on the Ministry's compliance with political neutrality, the effectiveness of the course, and the reasoning for using the Pākehā Project in response to part 4 are provided below.

Improving justice outcomes for Māori is one of the Ministry's strategic priorities as set out in its Statement of Intent 2023-2027. The long-term goal is for all New Zealanders, including Māori, to experience an equitable justice system. . The Public Service Act 2020 places explicit responsibilities on Public Service leaders to build and maintain the capability to engage with Māori and understand Māori perspectives.

In 2021, the Ministry recognised that it did not have sufficient capability to engage with Māori and understand Māori perspectives or meet the strategic priority of improving justice outcomes for Māori. The Strategic Leadership Team agreed to implement an operating model to support broad capability growth with a targeted and intensive approach. The operating model was named Te Ngira Kāpehu.

This was a non-compulsory course. Staff were invited to volunteer to be involved as a peer coach, champion, or part of the co-design teams to develop people, practice and process initiatives and improvements. Staff that opted into this course received training and ongoing coaching over the year.

Te Ngira Kāpehu was implemented in three workstreams: people, practice and process. This programme included co-design, design, and delivery of peer coach training for two core groups of staff from the Ministry's Policy and People Experience teams, as well as supervision over the year for 37 staff.

The Pākehā Project was contracted due to their expertise in successfully delivering programmes that lead to organisational change. They were recommended by Statistics New Zealand, which had run a similar programme.

As a result of training provided by the Pākehā Project, staff who participated have established two peer coaching groups which run monthly catch-up sessions. The expected outcome of the training when it was initiated was that peer coaches would be able to build the capability of their colleagues on Te Tiriti o Waitangi analysis. This was expected to deliver an improvement in the quality of our analysis, advice, practices, and processes.

Question 5: Alternative options

In response to part 5 of your request, no other programs were considered. The rationale for choosing The Pākehā Project is outlined in the attached document pack.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website at: [Official Information Act responses | New Zealand Ministry of Justice](#)

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



Marcus Akuhata-Brown

Pou Whakatere, Deputy Secretary Strategy, Ātea a Rangi – Strategy