

Our ref CASE-018968
Contact Abbas Hakimi
14 January 2025



Lance Lavery

fyi-request-29285-1d14b033@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Lance

Your request for information regarding the Ombudsman’s involvement in Police identification issues

I refer to your correspondence of 22 November 2024, in which you request information about the Ombudsman’s involvement or oversight concerning issues of police constable identification, and in particular, cases involving police constables refusing to identify themselves when interacting with members of the public.

As you are aware, the Ombudsman is not subject to either the Official Information Act 1982 or the Privacy Act 2020. However, the Ombudsman does endeavour to act in a manner consistent with the spirit of those Acts, to the extent this is possible and appropriate, and subject to the Ombudsman’s statutory secrecy and confidentiality requirements.

The Ombudsman does not investigate Police conduct

The Ombudsman does not have authority, under the Ombudsmen Act 1975, to investigate complaints about the conduct of Police, including issues concerning police identifying themselves. It is also not generally part of the Ombudsman’s role to provide advice to Police or other agencies in relation to Police operational matters or conduct.

Complaints and concerns about Police conduct are dealt with by the Independent Police Conduct Authority (IPCA). You may wish to address your request to the IPCA.

Accessing information about Police employees under the OIA

You also queried whether the Ombudsman has provided ‘*any guidance, recommendations, or rulings regarding police officer accountability and transparency, particularly concerning their obligation to identify themselves*’.

While I understand your query relates to the conduct of police constables interacting with members of the public in person, the Ombudsman has published a [guide to requesting the ‘Names and contact details of public sector employees’](#) under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

You may also be interested in [this published case note](#), concerning the Ombudsman’s investigation into Police’s refusal of a request for names and addresses of two police officers. In

the circumstances of that particular case, the Ombudsman considered Police were entitled to withhold the identities of the police officers.

While the Ombudsman is unable to assist further, I hope the above is helpful in clarifying matters.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Nelson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tom Nelson
Principal Advisor