

20 March 2026

James

[fyi-request-33573-59941dfa@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-33573-59941dfa@requests.fyi.org.nz)  
[fyi-request-34014-a7b8bd6d@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-34014-a7b8bd6d@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Tēnā koe James

**Official Information Act (OIA) request: Supermarket vouchers and unanswered communications**

On 21 January 2026, you contacted Stats NZ via <https://fyi.org.nz/> requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *Please provide the total number and value of supermarket vouchers issued under the Census drive. Please provide the supermarket brands these vouchers were linked to e.g. New World, Pak' nSave etc.*

*Please provide the total number and value of supermarket vouchers issued to the Whanau Ora Commissioning Agency. Have all the vouchers been redeemed? If not, how many remain outstanding? Were vouchers used to purchase lower value meat packs, which were given out instead of vouchers, so some vouchers could be held back?*

*Please provide the total number and value of supermarket vouchers issued to the Manukau Urban Māori Authority, if any.*

*What were the terms and conditions issued with the vouchers - could unused vouchers be used by agencies/organisations?*

*What systems did Stats NZ have to make sure all vouchers were used correctly and went to those who participated in the census? Please provide all the checks and balances that were in place.*

*Recently the Manukau Urban Māori Authority revealed they were sitting on thousands of unused Pak' nSave vouchers which they were considering distributing to staff in order to boost staff morale. MUMA also considered providing easter egg packages for staff and their whanau using the Pak' nSave vouchers. Are these vouchers from any activity linked to Stats NZ either directly or indirectly?*

I also acknowledge your subsequent follow up emails of 24 February 2026, 26 February 2026, and 3 March 2026 via the FYI website, and your email request of 10 March 2026 for the following information:

info@stats.govt.nz  
toll-free 0508 525 525  
stats.govt.nz

- *Under the OIA please provide all communications relating to the following request made on the 21st of January, three subsequent follow up messages sent on the 24th of February, 26th of February and 3rd of March and a direct message sent via the Platform X on the 5th of March.....all regarding the same OIA request which has failed to be acknowledged by Stats NZ.*

I apologise for the delay in responding to your original request of 21 January 2026. On receiving your email of 13 March 2026, a search of our inbox discovered that your previous emails were filtered to an inbox that was not monitored.

As your messages went unnoticed until 13 March 2026, I can confirm that there are no communications that exist in relation to your initial request, your follow up messages, or your direct message through the platform X. As such, your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

In respect of your initial request, majority of information in scope is publicly available as part of the [Misuse of data report and remediation plan](#), and the [proactive release of materials associated with the investigation](#). For clarity and especially given the delay in responding to your initial request, answers to each of the questions are provided below.

***Please provide the total number and value of supermarket vouchers issued under the Census drive. Please provide the supermarket brands these vouchers were linked to e.g. New World, Pak' nSave etc.***

The relevant section of the contract between Stats NZ and Te Pou Matakana Limited trading as Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency (WOCA) noted the following:

***Whānau contribution***

*Part of the Whānau Ora operational model will include whānau contribution to encourage and support whānau to participate in Census. The programme could include the use of grocery vouchers.*

*It is anticipated that up to \$1 million dollars may be invested in this aspect of the programme.*

*Te Whānau o Waipareira will be accountable for all processes around the implementation of the eligibility criteria for receiving vouchers and the secure tracking and auditable-record keeping in relation to koha and vouchers.*

Vouchers were not directly purchased or issued by Stats NZ. It was anticipated that \$1 million of the total contract value would be used to purchase grocery vouchers. WOCA subsequently confirmed the purchase of \$1 million worth of Pak n Save vouchers, based

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on a \$100 voucher per household visited. On this basis, 10,000 vouchers in total were purchased.

***Please provide the total number and value of supermarket vouchers issued to the Whanau Ora Commissioning Agency. Have all the vouchers been redeemed? If not, how many remain outstanding? Were vouchers used to purchase lower value meat packs, which were given out instead of vouchers, so some vouchers could be held back?***

Stats NZ does not hold any information on whether all vouchers were redeemed, or about the use of the vouchers in the manner described, following their purchase by WOCA. As such, your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

Stats NZ received confirmation through its final reporting that the number of households visited as part of the WOCA initiative exceeded 10,000 – accounting for the distribution of all vouchers purchased.

***Please provide the total number and value of supermarket vouchers issued to the Manukau Urban Māori Authority, if any.***

Manukau Urban Māori Authority were allocated \$180,000 in vouchers by WOCA – being 1,800 vouchers at \$100 value.

***What were the terms and conditions issued with the vouchers - could unused vouchers be used by agencies/organisations?***

Stats NZ did not issue the vouchers to WOCA, or the subcontractors such as Manukau Urban Māori Authority under the agreement. As such, no terms and conditions were issued with the vouchers.

Your request for this information is therefore refused under section 18(e) of the Act as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

Note that the contract with WOCA sought the outcome of 50,000 completed individual census forms, through visiting approximately 10,000 dwellings. Stats NZ was provided with regular reporting on contract service delivery, which included reporting on voucher provision.

***What systems did Stats NZ have to make sure all vouchers were used correctly and went to those who participated in the census? Please provide all the checks and balances that were in place.***

As mentioned above, the contract for services noted that WOCA would be accountable for all processes related to implementing the eligibility criteria for receiving vouchers and auditable record-keeping about vouchers. As such, your request for this information is

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refused under section 18(e) of the Act as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

Regular reporting was in place to track contract service delivery. However, we acknowledge that the *Independent Investigation and Assurance Review of Allegations of Misuse of 2023 Census Information* made findings in relation to the monitoring mechanisms established to ensure compliance with the contract. Accordingly, the management of this contract was a key focus of our Misuse of 2023 Census Data Remediation Programme. As a result of that we have done further work on our policies and expectations around the use of incentives. More broadly, work to implement a robust risk assessment, monitoring, assurance and audit programme for all contracts was completed as part of the remediation programme.

***Recently the Manukau Urban Māori Authority revealed they were sitting on thousands of unused Pak' nSave vouchers which they were considering distributing to staff in order to boost staff morale. MUMA also considered providing easter egg packages for staff and their whanau using the Pak' nSave vouchers. Are these vouchers from any activity linked to Stats NZ either directly or indirectly?***

Given the terms of the contract, Stats NZ is unable to answer this question. Your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

It is Stats NZ's policy to proactively release its responses to official information requests where possible. This letter, with your personal details removed, will be published on the Stats NZ website. Publishing responses creates greater openness and transparency of government decision-making and helps better inform public understanding of the reasons for decisions.

Nāku noa, nā



Fau Logo  
**Senior Manager, Executive & Government Relations**  
**Office of the Chief Executive**  
**Stats NZ**

info@stats.govt.nz  
toll-free 0508 525 525  
stats.govt.nz