



24 April 2026

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Tēnā koe Joshua,

Your Official Information Act 1982 request, reference OIA 2526-1023

I am responding to your email of 20 March 2025 to the Department of Internal Affairs (the Department) requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

1. The "Five Country Working Group"

The released email references a "five country working group" that Nick Law and a redacted individual sit on.

Please provide the formal name of this working group, its Terms of Reference (or equivalent founding document/mandate), and a list of the specific countries involved (if different from the standard 'Five Eyes' partnership).

Furthermore, I request information detailing the extent to which this specific working group has been involved in discussions, intelligence sharing, or policy development regarding minimum age restrictions for social media. Please provide any meeting agendas, minutes, briefing notes, or shared policy documents circulated within or generated by this group since October 1, 2023, that specifically address age verification mandates, device-level vs. provider-level implementation, or youth social media bans.

2. Follow-up Correspondence and Actions

Please provide copies of any direct replies, forwarded threads, or subsequent correspondence stemming from the December 12, 2025 email sent by John Michael (Subject: "Under 16").

Please provide any further correspondence or meeting minutes between the DIA Digital Safety Team and the Australian Attorney-General's office or the Australian eSafety Commissioner occurring after December 12, 2025, regarding age verification or the social media ban.

3. Privacy Planning and Implementation

The Australian counterpart advised that privacy "should be factored into any planning that NZ does."

Please provide copies of any subsequent internal memos, briefings, risk registers, or aides-mémoire produced by the DIA Digital Safety Team or Regulation and Identity

Services that discuss how to factor these privacy risks into New Zealand's approach to age verification.

Please provide any draft or finalized Privacy Impact Assessments (PIAs) regarding the proposed social media age restrictions or related age-assurance technologies initiated since October 1, 2024.

Response to your request

Part One:

The formal name of this working group is called Five Country Working Group to Tackle Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. The participating countries are the same as those involved in the Five Eyes Partnership. Further information about this working group is available at: <http://www.dpmc.govt.nz/news/five-country-ministerial-2025>. This webpage also includes previous communiqués outlining how the working group was established.

The Department does not hold the terms of reference or any equivalent founding document or mandate for this working group. We have also consulted with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), which has advised that it likewise does not hold the terms of reference.

If you have any further questions or requests relating to the Five Country Working Group, we recommend contacting DPMC directly, as it is a key agency for this group.

We are unable to provide meeting agendas, minutes, briefing notes, or shared policy documents circulated within or generated by this working group under section 6(b)(i) of the Act. The release of such information would be likely to prejudice the entrusting of information to the Government of New Zealand on a basis of confidence by the government of another country or by an agency of such a government. Accordingly, this part of your request is refused.

The Department also notes that the primary focus of the working group is on issues relating specifically to child sexual exploitation and abuse. While the group may note regulatory changes across jurisdictions where these have implications for combating child sexual exploitation and abuse, it does not progress, develop, or own those regulatory changes.

Part Two:

We have consulted with the Digital Safety team within the Department, including John Michael, Director for the Digital Safety and Investigations Group. The Department confirms that, apart from the single email previously released in response to your earlier OIA request, it does not hold any further information within scope of this part of your request that is not already captured under part three.

Part Three:

Work relating to social media age restrictions is currently under active consideration. Accordingly, all information within scope of this part of your request is being withheld under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act, in order to maintain constitutional conventions which, for the time being, protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials.

For transparency, once decisions have been announced, you may find the following webpages helpful:

- Department's Proactive Releases: <https://www.dia.govt.nz/Proactive-Releases>
- Minister of Education: <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/minister/hon-erica-stanford>
- Minister of Internal Affairs: <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/minister/hon-brooke-van-velden>

Public interest considerations

As is required by section 9(1) of the Act, consideration has been given as to whether the withholding of information is outweighed by other public interest considerations which would make it desirable to make this information available. In this instance, it is not considered to be the case.

Accessing the Ombudsman

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

Nāku noa, nā



Mark Batt
**Director Branch Performance
Policy and Te Tiriti**