

11 May 2026

P Peach

fyi-request-34282-7860e839@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe P Peach

Your request for official information, reference: HNZ00202117

Thank you for your email on 28 April 2026, asking Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora (Health NZ) for information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA) regarding NAATI credential compliance, subcontracting practices and national oversight of interpreting and translation services in Health NZ. Your full original request and the subsequent refinement is set out at the bottom of this letter.

Response

Please note that the data in this response is provisional and used for operational purposes. It has not been through the full quality assurance process that we use before publishing data and therefore is subject to change.

For the sake of clarity, I will address each question in turn.

SECTION A: NATIONAL OVERSIGHT AND PROCUREMENT STRUCTURE

1. Whether Health New Zealand has a national policy or framework governing the procurement and delivery of interpreting and translation services, or whether procurement decisions are made independently by each regional division.

Health NZ does not have a national policy or framework governing the procurement and delivery of interpreting services at present. Health NZ is working on increasing regional and national consistency across all our services including Interpreting services.

Please note that, currently, for Te Toka Tumai, decisions about the procurement and delivery of interpreting and translation services are made independently by this district.

2. A list of all external interpreting and translation providers currently contracted to Health New Zealand at a national or regional level, including the region they serve, the commencement and expiry date of each arrangement, and whether the contract was competitively tendered.

Auckland | Te Toka Tumai

Te Toka Tumai use the following external agencies when required:

- Connect Interpreting – on site and video Sign Language Interpreters
- Deaf Aotearoa – on site and video Sign Language interpreters
- Decypher – telephone and video interpreters for all languages
- Connecting Now – telephone and video interpreters for all languages

These providers all participated in a MBIE tender process to provide interpreting services to Government agencies.

Please note, Te Toka Tumai does not currently have individual contracts with these external agencies, but the Health NZ procurement team is currently working on getting contracts in place.

Canterbury | Waitaha

In Canterbury, Health NZ Hospital and Specialist services has an internal interpreting service and uses external Interpreting NZ and Connecting Now if they cannot provide a contracted interpreter. Canterbury provides interpreting services for deaf patients through iSign.

Canterbury Primary Health Organisations (PHOs) and community-based service providers have their own arrangements for the provision of interpreting services. Health NZ does not have oversight of these contractual arrangements. I am refusing your request under section 18(g) of the OIA as the information you have requested is not held by Health NZ and we have no grounds to believe that the information is held by another entity subject to the OIA.

The interpreters are independent contractors. There is no tender process.

External interpreting service providers used in Canterbury participated in a MBIE tender process to provide interpreting services to Government agencies. The Health NZ procurement team is currently working on contracts for these providers across all Districts.

Capital Coast and Hutt Valley (CCHV)

CCHV use the following external agencies when required:

- Interpreting New Zealand – Face to Face Interpreters
- Deaf Aotearoa – on site and video Sign Language interpreters
- Decypher – telephone and video interpreters for all languages
- Connecting Now – telephone and video interpreters for all languages
- Straker translations – Face to face and video interpreters for all languages

These providers all participated in a MBIE interpreting services tender process. CCHV does not currently have individual contracts with these external agencies, but the Health New Zealand procurement team is currently working on getting contracts in place.

3. Whether any regional divisions of Health New Zealand participate in the MBIE Language Assistance Services panel contracts for telephone, video, or face-to-face interpreting, and if so which divisions and under what arrangements.

Health NZ does not participate in the MBIE Language Assistance Services panel contracts for telephone, video, or face-to-face interpreting.

Therefore, your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the OIA as this information does not exist.

4. For regional divisions that operate their own in-house interpreting services (such as Te Toka Tumai Auckland), details of how those services are structured, including the number of interpreters employed or contracted, the languages covered, and the employment status of practitioners (directly employed, contracted, or casual).

Auckland Te Toka Tumai

In-house interpreting service for Te Toka Tumai includes:

- Permanent Interpreters – 10 FTE - Mandarin, Cantonese, French, Tahitian, Urdu, Hindi, Bengali
- Independent Contractors – 215 – who work on a required basis

The following languages are covered by independent contractors: Afghani Dari, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Assyrian, Bahasa Indonesia, Bengali, Bosnian, Burmese, Burundi, Cambodian, Cantonese, Chin (Burmese Dialect), Cook Island, Croatian, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Fijian Hindi, Fijian Native, Filipino Tagalog, French, German, Gujarati, Hindi, Hokkein, Iranian Farsi, Italian, Japanese, Karen, Kinyamulenge, Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Korean, Kurdish, Kurmanji, Lao, Macedonian, Mnadarin, Mongolian, Nepalese, Niuean, Portuguese, Punjabi, Pushtu, Rohingya, Romanian, Russian, Samoan, Serbian, Shanghainese, Singhalese, Solomon Islands Pijin, Somali, Spanish, Sudanese Arabic, Swahili, Tahitian, Taishanese, Taiwanese, Tamil, Teochew, Thai, Tigrinya, Tongan, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vanuatu Bislama, and Vietnamese.

Canterbury | Waitaha

Health NZ Canterbury Medical and Surgical has an Interpreter Service for inpatients, outpatient appointments, and patients receiving services in the community. We also provide interpreters for some outsourced consultations or procedures and some community services, such as Canterbury Breastcare.

Interpreter Services uses casual contractors, vets them under the Children's Act 2014 and the Children's Regulations 2015 and seeks references before enlisting them. Please also refer to our response to question 2 of this OIA.

We have a current list of 86 interpreters and there is no limit on the languages covered.

Capital Coast and Hutt Valley

CCHV outsources its interpreting services.

5. The total expenditure by Health New Zealand on interpreting and translation services — both in-house and externally procured — for each financial year [FY] from 2019/20 to 2024/25, and year-to-date for 2025/26, broken down by regional division and provider where available.

Auckland | Te Toka Tumai

Please refer to the attached **Appendix 1** which is an Excel Spreadsheet with the requested information. Please refer specifically to the sheet labelled 'Auckland Q.5'.

Canterbury | Waitaha

Please refer to the attached **Appendix 1**, specifically to the sheet labelled 'Canterbury Q.5'. This sets out the 2021/22 FY to 2025/26 FY (9 months YTD) indicative spend for Canterbury district.

Please note that we cannot provide a breakdown by individual provider due to commercial sensitivity. Therefore, this information is withheld under section 9(2)(b)(ii) of the OIA as, if released, it would be likely to unreasonably prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information.

Capital Coast and Hutt Valley

Please refer to the attached **Appendix 1**, specifically to the sheet labelled 'CCHV Q.5'. Please also note that data prior to its formation (1 July 2022) is not available; therefore, the information provided is from the 2023/24 financial year onwards.

Please note that where there are no figures, it means there was no translation required. For example, in 2022, there was no Bengali translation required.

6. The total number of interpreting sessions or assignments delivered under Health New Zealand contracts for each financial year from 2019/20 to 2024/25, and year-to-date for 2025/26, broken down by regional division, service type (telephone, video, face-to-face, in-house), and language where available.

Auckland | Te Toka Tumai

Please refer to the attached **Appendix 1**, specifically to the sheet labelled 'Auckland Q.6'. The table shows the number of interpreting assignments delivered and is broken down by each service type and financial year.

Canterbury | Waitaha

This information is not readily available and will require considerable resource to extract it from the database. Health NZ is unable to provide you with this information as it is held in notes on individual case files. In order to provide you with this information, our staff would have to manually review thousands of files. As such, we refuse your request under section 18(f) of the OIA.

I have considered whether fixing a charge for the supply of the information or extending the timeframe for response would enable Health NZ to respond. I do not consider that either option would remove the impact that supplying the information would have on our other operations.

While we cannot provide what you have requested, we can note with you that in the 2025/26 Financial Year, Health NZ Waitaha Medical and Surgical Interpreter Service recorded 18,424 appointments. This equates to approximately 1,535 bookings per month.

Capital Coast and Hutt Valley

Please refer to the attached **Appendix 1**, specifically to the sheet labelled 'CCHV Q.6'. Please note that the language data breakdown is based on information from the two largest providers, Interpreting NZ and Connecting Now. The breakdown of languages is based on Vendor.

Please note that where there are no figures in the spreadsheet, means that no translation was required for that specific language.

SECTION B: SUBCONTRACTING ARRANGEMENTS

7. Whether Health New Zealand's external interpreting and translation providers are permitted to subcontract assignments to third parties, including overseas-based agencies or individual contractors located outside New Zealand.

Auckland | Te Toka Tumai

Te Toka Tumai does not use any interpreters from overseas as individual contractors. However, we use Connecting Now as an agency which is based in Australia.

Canterbury | Waitaha

There is no Health NZ national interpreting service contract in place. Decisions about the use of overseas contractors or subcontract assignments sit at district level. Your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the OIA as this information does not exist.

Capital Coast and Hutt Valley

Interpreters are primarily located in New Zealand with work being transferred to Australian interpreters where there is no New Zealand interpreter available in the selected language. On average 85-90% of all interpreting calls for Health NZ are handled by New Zealand interpreters; any calls being responded to by Australian interpreters requires two mandatory conditions be met:

- they are NAATI accredited; and
- have completed the Working in Aotearoa in the Public Service Context e-learning modules.

8. Any conditions or restrictions in Health New Zealand's contracts with interpreting and translation providers regarding the use of subcontractors, including any requirements that subcontractors be based in New Zealand or hold an appropriate New Zealand work visa.

Auckland | Te Toka Tumai

All Te Toka Tumai in-house contractors must be based in New Zealand and hold a New Zealand working visa. Te Toka Tumai do not contract any individuals from overseas.

Canterbury | Waitaha

There is no Health NZ national interpreting service contract in place for Waitaha. As such your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the OIA as this information does not exist.

Capital Coast and Hutt Valley

The use of sub-contractors is managed by the provider of translation/interpreting– Health NZ does not hold any information on the subcontractors/interpreters.

9. Whether Health New Zealand requires providers to disclose the identity, location, or credentials of individual interpreters or translators — including subcontractors — who carry out assignments on Health New Zealand's behalf.

Auckland | Te Toka Tumai

No.

Canterbury Waitaha

Please refer to our response to part 7 of this OIA.

Capital Coast and Hutt Valley

Yes, the interpreter details will be made available at the booking and they will identify themselves. Interpreters will identify themselves at the commencement of the assignment and further detail is sent as part of the Customer Detail Report monthly, including name, ID and NAATI accreditation level.

10. For regional divisions that operate in-house services and exhaust their in-house capacity: what arrangements exist for overflow demand, including whether in-house services subcontract to external providers or individual interpreters, and on what terms.

Auckland | Te Toka Tumai

The Te Toka Tumai interpreter booking process prioritises the permanent interpreters first. Any additional assignments are then allocated to contracted interpreters. Once these resources have

been fully utilised, a request(s) is submitted to Waitematā and Counties Manukau interpreting services, or other external agencies. The last option is to use interpreters from the external agencies.

Canterbury | Waitaha

Health NZ Waitaha Medical and Surgical Interpreter Service uses Connecting Now and Interpreting New Zealand if we are unable to provide a contracted interpreter.

Capital Coast and Hutt Valley

CCHV uses outsourced interpreting services.

11. Any instances where Health New Zealand became aware that an assignment was conducted by a person located outside New Zealand or by an uncredentialed subcontractor, and any action taken as a result.

Auckland Te Toka Tumai

Te Toka Tumai is not aware of any assignments being conducted by a person outside New Zealand, other than when using an agency such as Connecting Now who are based in Australia. Te Toka Tumai is not aware of any assignments being conducted by an un-credentialed subcontractor. Therefore, your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the OIA as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

Canterbury Waitaha, Capital Coast and Hutt Valley

Canterbury and CCHV are not aware of any assignments being conducted by an un-credentialed subcontractor. Therefore, your request for this information is also refused under section 18(e) of the OIA.

SECTION C: NAATI CREDENTIAL COMPLIANCE

12. What mechanism, if any, Health New Zealand uses at a national level to verify that individual interpreters and translators — whether in-house, externally contracted, or subcontracted — hold a valid NAATI credential or Working Towards NAATI (WTN) status.

There is no Health NZ national verification process in place. However, districts may have their own verification processes. Currently Health NZ does not require NAATI credentialing to work as an interpreter in our services. This is managed by Vendor – Vendor has internal professional standards and audits.

Please note that Te Toka Tumai has opted out of the NAATI initiative as a compulsory qualification for their interpreters.

13. Whether individual regional divisions have their own credential verification processes, and if so whether Health New Zealand holds any information about what those processes are.

Auckland | Te Toka Tumai

Te Toka Tumai only employ / contract interpreters who hold an Interpreting or Translation qualification from either AUT or Unitec.

Canterbury | Waitaha

No, therefore, your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the OIA as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

Capital Coast and Hutt Valley

CCHV does not have a national policy or framework governing the procurement and delivery of interpreting services at present. Therefore, your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the OIA as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

14. Whether Health New Zealand requires its external interpreting and translation providers to maintain and supply a current register of credentialled practitioners working under Health New Zealand contracts, and if so whether such registers have been received and reviewed.

There is no Health NZ national register of credentialled practitioners in place.

Auckland | Te Toka Tumai

Te Toka Tumai does not maintain a list of currently credentialled practitioners from our external agencies. However, these agencies exclusively work with qualified interpreters.

Canterbury | Waitaha

No, therefore, your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the OIA as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

Capital Coast and Hutt Valley

Managed by Vendor – Vendor has internal professional standards and audits to maintain industry standards ISO 9001 Certified as outlined at the following link:

https://www.interpret.org.nz/files/ugd/43f3fe_e90f0101c7e8484e8ba887ec95ec3d92.pdf.

15. Any audits, spot checks, or compliance reviews conducted by Health New Zealand — at a national or regional level — on its interpreting and translation providers or in-house services since 1 July 2024 to verify NAATI credential compliance, including the methodology and findings of any such reviews.

No audits, spot checks or compliance reviews have been conducted by Health NZ at national level.

Auckland | Te Toka Tumai

Te Toka Tumai has opted out of the NAATI initiative as a mandatory qualification for interpreters.

Canterbury | Waitaha

We recognise the valuable expertise of experienced health interpreters in New Zealand, as well as the importance of New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) qualifications. We will ensure adherence to high standards and provide ongoing training and development opportunities for interpreters in healthcare settings. NAATI credentialling is not a mandated requirement by Health NZ, nationally, so no audits or reviews are conducted.

Capital Coast and Hutt Valley

Health NZ does not have a national policy or framework governing the procurement and delivery of interpreting services at present. Please note that our Interpreters are managed by the Vendor – Requirement of the vendor that Interpreters working across Health NZ must hold NAATI accreditation or be working towards accreditation.

All interpreters have a valid police/conviction check and are governed by the NZSTI Code of Ethics, AUSIT Code of Ethics and Conduct.

16. Any instances since 1 July 2024 where a provider or in-house interpreter was found not to hold the required NAATI credential or Working Towards NAATI (WTN) status, and any consequences or remedial action taken.

Auckland | Te Toka Tumai

Te Toka Tumai has opted out of the NAATI initiative as a mandatory qualification for our interpreters

Canterbury | Waitaha

As noted above, NAATI credentialing is not a mandated requirement by Health NZ. Therefore, your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the OIA as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

Capital Coast and Hutt Valley

CCHV is not aware of such instances, therefore, your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the OIA as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

17. Any complaints received by Health New Zealand since 1 July 2024 from staff, patients, or members of the public regarding the qualifications or conduct of an interpreter or translator, and any actions taken.

Auckland | Te Toka Tumai

Te Toka Tumai has not received any complaints since 1 July 2024 regarding the qualifications of an interpreter or translator.

Te Toka Tumai has had two complaints since 1 July 2024 regarding the conduct of an interpreter or translator. In both cases the complaint was investigated, and feedback and coaching were provided to the interpreters involved.

Canterbury | Waitaha

Since 1 July 2024, Health NZ Canterbury Medical and Surgical Interpreter Service has received eight complaints in total. Four have been about specific interpreters and four about general issues, such as no interpreter booked, lack of availability, and cancelled appointments. The complaints about specific interpreters have been managed with a combination of meetings, telephone calls, and letters.

SECTION D: INTERPRETER AND TRANSLATOR PAY VISIBILITY

18. Whether Health New Zealand has any information about the rates or fees paid by its external providers to individual interpreters or translators for assignments conducted on Health New Zealand's behalf.

Auckland | Te Toka Tumai

Te Toka Tumai does not have any information on how much our external providers pay their interpreters. Therefore, your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the OIA as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

Canterbury | Waitaha

Health NZ Waitaha Medical and Surgical Interpreter Service does not hold this information. While Health NZ knows what we are charged, we do not know what the individuals receive. Therefore, your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the OIA as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

Capital Coast and Hutt Valley

CCHV does not have the requested information. Therefore, I am refusing your request under section 18(e) of the OIA as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

19. The pay rates or remuneration bands applicable to in-house interpreters employed or contracted by Health New Zealand regional divisions, where this information is held centrally.

There are no Health NZ national pay rates or remuneration bands in place.

Auckland | Te Toka Tumai

Contracted interpreters at Te Toka Tumai are paid as per the Allied, Public Health, Scientific and Technical PSA Collective Agreement. Please see the following table as reference:

Core Scale – Group B	1 June 2023	4 Sept 2023	2 Sept 2024
Step 7	\$80,193	\$84,193	\$86,719
Step 6	\$76,374	\$80,374	\$82,785
Step 5	\$72,737	\$76,737	\$79,039
Step 4	\$69,273	\$73,273	\$75,471
Step 3	\$65,975	\$69,975	\$72,074

Canterbury | Waitaha

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

Capital Coast and Hutt Valley

CCHV uses outsourced interpreting services.

20. Whether Health New Zealand has ever sought, as part of contract negotiations, tendering processes, or performance reviews, any information about the pay or working conditions of interpreters or translators engaged through its provider contracts.

Health NZ has not sought as part of contract negotiations tendering processes, or performance reviews, any information about the pay or working conditions of interpreters or translators engaged through its provider contracts.

Auckland | Te Toka Tumai

Te Toka Tumai has never sought, as part of contract negotiations, tendering processes, or performance reviews, any information about the pay or working conditions of interpreters or translators engaged through its provider contracts.

Canterbury | Waitaha

Canterbury has not sought information about the pay or working conditions of interpreters or translators engaged through its provider contracts. Therefore, your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the OIA as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

Capital Coast and Hutt Valley

CCHV has not sought information about the pay or working conditions of interpreters or translators engaged through its provider contracts. Therefore, your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the OIA as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found

21. Any internal policies, briefings, risk assessments, or correspondence within Health New Zealand regarding the fair remuneration or employment conditions of interpreters and translators, including any concerns raised about the margin between rates paid to external providers and rates passed on to practitioners.

Auckland | Te Toka Tumai

No such documents exist at Te Toka Tumai; therefore, this part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the OIA as this information does not exist.

Canterbury | Waitaha

Waitaha operates an in-house Interpreting Service supporting hospital and specialist services across the Christchurch City region (excluding Ashburton). The service is managed within Medical and Surgical Services through the Customer Services Office.

It provides interpreting only; translation services are procured separately from accredited providers. Interpreters are contracted by language, including New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL). Interpreter costs are charged to the requesting service. Administrative processes, including invoicing, are outdated, although improvements are currently underway with support from Finance.

There are two historical rate structures in place. Please note that these rates have not been reviewed or increased for over 10 years.

- A higher rate for NZSL interpreters
- A standard rate for all other interpreters

Please note, to avoid withholding information under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA, such as correspondence containing personal information of individual interpreters, we have provided a summary of the communication/correspondence relevant to this part of the OIA for Health NZ Canterbury.

Summary of Interpreter Rate Review Timeline based on relevant Correspondence:

- Ongoing issue (2022–2023): Interpreters repeatedly asked when their rates would be reviewed. This was escalated to leadership, but there was no clear process or outcome
- July 2023: Interpreters formally requested a rate increase as a group. Escalated to senior management, but no action was taken
- October 2023: Canterbury made a submission to the national interpreting work. No recorded outcome
- November 2023: National decision: Directly employed interpreters received a 30% pay increase and lump sum payment. Contracted interpreters (this group) were not included
- January 2024 (multiple developments):
 - A national stocktake was completed and guidance on rate reviews was requested. No response received
 - A case was submitted asking how to review rates. Response advised it must be managed locally within budget, with no national solution
 - An interpreter withdrew services, leading to greater reliance on external agencies
- April 2024: National leadership endorsed improving interpreting services nationwide. However, no detailed outcomes or guidance were provided yet

Capital Coast and Hutt Valley

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

How to get in touch

If you have any questions, you can contact us at h.nz.OIA@tewhaturora.govt.nz.

If you are not happy with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, Health NZ may proactively release a copy of this response on our website. All requester data, including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Matthew McLay
Manager Government Services
Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora

Refinement

On 9 April 2026, we contacted you requesting to refine and clarify your OIA request,

“Health NZ has undertaken an initial scoping exercise on your request with our business units and across our regions and 18 Health NZ Districts. The information you have requested includes the time period when Health NZ did not exist (prior to 1 July 2022). Before it was established on 1 July 2022 there were 20 former District Health Boards (DHBs) in existence and each procured its own services. To collate and prepare the information requested would be a substantive collation and research exercise across all former DHBs and the current Health NZ districts. This means your request may be refused under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). We would like to work with you to avoid this and ensure we can provide a response that best meets your needs.

Suggested refinement.

We invite you to consider the following refinement.

- *You narrow the scope of your request to a **specific Health NZ district**. A link to the districts can be found here: <https://www.healthnz.govt.nz/about-us/what-we-do/our-regions>*
- *For **your selected district** the timeframe for your request is for the 2025/2026 Financial Year. In addition, could you please confirm that the interpretation services are for spoken languages only or include the translation of written material into other languages.”*

On 10 April 2026, you replied with the following,

“Thank you for your response and for the initial scoping exercise. I am happy to work with Health NZ to refine my request and appreciate the constructive approach. I accept that collating information across former District Health Boards prior to 1 July 2022 would be unduly burdensome, and I am happy to limit my request to the Health NZ period only.

In terms of district scope, I propose narrowing my request to the three largest Health NZ districts by population: Auckland (Te Toka Tumai), Wellington (Capital, Coast and Hutt Valley), and Canterbury (Te Whatu Ora Waitaha). I consider this a reasonable middle ground focused on the districts most likely to hold substantial and comparable information on interpreting procurement.

In terms of timeframe, I propose the period from 1 July 2022 (the establishment of Health NZ) to the date of response, including year-to-date figures for 2025/26. This covers three full financial years within the Health NZ era and captures the period both before and after the NAATI credentialling requirement came into force on 1 July 2024, which is directly relevant to my request.

To confirm the scope of services: my request covers spoken language interpreting services and written translation services, for community and ethnic languages and te reo Māori. It does not extend to New Zealand Sign Language.

I confirm that my request is otherwise unchanged across all sections - subcontracting arrangements, NAATI credential compliance, and interpreter pay visibility - as these apply to the three districts and timeframe specified above.

Response to section 18(f)

I note that section 18(f) is a discretionary ground for refusal, and that the Ombudsman's guidelines require agencies to consider releasing parts of a request that can be answered without substantial collation even where other parts cannot. I ask that Health NZ evaluate

each of my questions individually and release answers to those that can be provided without substantial collation, identifying by question number any questions it considers require further research.

I also note that several of my questions are policy and process questions requiring no collation of records - for example, whether providers are permitted to subcontract, whether credential registers are required, and whether procurement criteria include consideration of practitioner pay. These can be answered from existing policy knowledge and do not engage section 18(f).

Given the significant public interest in accountability around publicly funded health services and compliance with the NAATI credentialling requirements, I ask that Health NZ exercise its discretion in favour of release where any doubt exists.

If Health NZ intends to refuse any part of this request, I ask that it provide written reasons specific to each question refused so that I may consider whether to refer the matter to the Office of the Ombudsman."

Full Original Request

SECTION A: NATIONAL OVERSIGHT AND PROCUREMENT STRUCTURE

- 1. Whether Health New Zealand has a national policy or framework governing the procurement and delivery of interpreting and translation services, or whether procurement decisions are made independently by each regional division.*
- 2. A list of all external interpreting and translation providers currently contracted to Health New Zealand at a national or regional level, including the region they serve, the commencement and expiry date of each arrangement, and whether the contract was competitively tendered.*
- 3. Whether any regional divisions of Health New Zealand participate in the MBIE Language Assistance Services panel contracts for telephone, video, or face-to-face interpreting, and if so which divisions and under what arrangements.*
- 4. For regional divisions that operate their own in-house interpreting services (such as Te Toka Tumai Auckland), details of how those services are structured, including the number of interpreters employed or contracted, the languages covered, and the employment status of practitioners (directly employed, contracted, or casual).*
- 5. The total expenditure by Health New Zealand on interpreting and translation services — both in-house and externally procured — for each financial year from 2019/20 to 2024/25, and year-to-date for 2025/26, broken down by regional division and provider where available.*
- 6. The total number of interpreting sessions or assignments delivered under Health New Zealand contracts for each financial year from 2019/20 to 2024/25, and year-to-date for 2025/26, broken down by regional division, service type (telephone, video, face-to-face, in-house), and language where available.*

SECTION B: SUBCONTRACTING ARRANGEMENTS

- 7. Whether Health New Zealand's external interpreting and translation providers are permitted to subcontract assignments to third parties, including overseas-based agencies or individual contractors located outside New Zealand.*
- 8. Any conditions or restrictions in Health New Zealand's contracts with interpreting and translation providers regarding the use of subcontractors, including any requirements that subcontractors be based in New Zealand or hold an appropriate New Zealand work visa.*
- 9. Whether Health New Zealand requires providers to disclose the identity, location, or credentials of individual interpreters or translators — including subcontractors — who carry out assignments on Health New Zealand's behalf.*
- 10. For regional divisions that operate in-house services and exhaust their in-house capacity: what arrangements exist for overflow demand, including whether in-house services subcontract to external providers or individual interpreters, and on what terms.*
- 11. Any instances where Health New Zealand became aware that an assignment was conducted by a person located outside New Zealand or by an uncredentialed subcontractor, and any action taken as a result.*

SECTION C: NAATI CREDENTIAL COMPLIANCE

12. *What mechanism, if any, Health New Zealand uses at a national level to verify that individual interpreters and translators — whether in-house, externally contracted, or subcontracted — hold a valid NAATI credential or Working Towards NAATI (WTN) status.*
13. *Whether individual regional divisions have their own credential verification processes, and if so whether Health New Zealand holds any information about what those processes are.*
14. *Whether Health New Zealand requires its external interpreting and translation providers to maintain and supply a current register of credentialed practitioners working under Health New Zealand contracts, and if so whether such registers have been received and reviewed.*
15. *Any audits, spot checks, or compliance reviews conducted by Health New Zealand — at a national or regional level — on its interpreting and translation providers or in-house services since 1 July 2024 to verify NAATI credential compliance, including the methodology and findings of any such reviews.*
16. *Any instances since 1 July 2024 where a provider or in-house interpreter was found not to hold the required NAATI credential or Working Towards NAATI (WTN) status, and any consequences or remedial action taken.*
17. *Any complaints received by Health New Zealand since 1 July 2024 from staff, patients, or members of the public regarding the qualifications or conduct of an interpreter or translator, and any actions taken.*

SECTION D: INTERPRETER AND TRANSLATOR PAY VISIBILITY

18. *Whether Health New Zealand has any information about the rates or fees paid by its external providers to individual interpreters or translators for assignments conducted on Health New Zealand's behalf.*
19. *The pay rates or remuneration bands applicable to in-house interpreters employed or contracted by Health New Zealand regional divisions, where this information is held centrally.*
20. *Whether Health New Zealand has ever sought, as part of contract negotiations, tendering processes, or performance reviews, any information about the pay or working conditions of interpreters or translators engaged through its provider contracts.*
21. *Any internal policies, briefings, risk assessments, or correspondence within Health New Zealand regarding the fair remuneration or employment conditions of interpreters and translators, including any concerns raised about the margin between rates paid to external providers and rates passed on to practitioners.*