

22 June 2026

Nigel Gray
fyi-request-34772-866743a5@requests.fyi.org.nz

REF: OIA-22302

Dear Nigel

Extension of time to respond to request made under the Official Information Act 1982

Thank you for your email of 23 May 2026 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

I am requesting the following information regarding the classification of road crashes as “drug-related”, “alcohol-related”, “medical-event-related”, or any similar causal category used in official reporting, dashboards, or public statements.

This request arises from the contradiction between:

Agency statements that no single factor can be confidently identified as the primary cause of a crash, and

The agency’s practice of classifying crashes into specific causal categories such as “drug-related”.

To resolve this contradiction, I request the following information:

1. The decision rules used to classify a crash as “drug-related”

Please provide:

The criteria, thresholds, decision rules, or tests used to determine that a crash is “drug-related”.

Whether toxicology detection alone is sufficient to classify a crash as “drug-related”.

Whether impairment must be established, and if so, how impairment is determined.

Whether causation must be established, and if so, how causation is determined.

2. The process for moving a crash from “pending toxicology” to “drug-related”

Please provide:

The workflow, internal guidance, or standard operating procedures governing this change.

*The roles or units responsible for making the classification decision.
Any quality-assurance or review processes applied before the classification is finalised.*

*3. The evidential standard required to classify a crash as “drug-related”
Please provide:*

The evidential threshold required (e.g., presence, impairment, contribution, causation).

Any scientific, legal, or policy basis for this threshold.

*Any documents that define or describe the difference between:
presence of a substance
impairment
causation
contribution*

*4. Reconciliation of the contradiction
Please provide:*

How the agency reconciles the statement that “no single factor can be confidently identified as the primary cause of a crash” with the practice of assigning crashes to specific causal categories such as “drug-related”.

Any internal documents, emails, memos, or guidance that address this issue.

5. Classification audit or accuracy checks Please provide:

Any audits, reviews, or assessments of the accuracy, consistency, or validity of crash-cause classifications.

Any documents discussing limitations, uncertainties, or risks associated with assigning causal labels based on toxicology results.

*6. Historical or current definitions
Please provide:*

All definitions of “drug-related crash” used by the agency in the last 10 years.

Any changes to these definitions, including the dates and reasons for the changes.

This letter is to advise you that NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) is extending the 20 working days available to respond to your request, as allowed for under section 15A of the Act. We require an additional 10 working days and will send you a response on or before 6 July 2026.

The deadline is being extended as the consultations necessary to make a decision on your request are such that a thorough response cannot reasonably be made within the original 20-working-day limit.

Under section 28 of the Act, you have the right to complain to the Ombudsman about the extension. More information about the Ombudsman is available online at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

If you would like to discuss the extension with NZTA, please email the Ministerial Services team via email to official.correspondence@nzta.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jackie Smith', is positioned to the left of a vertical line.

Jackie Smith
Manager – Ministerial Services