

29 June 2026

Penny Claridge

fyi-request-34888-b0a660a3@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Penny

Your request for official information, reference: HNZ00204723

Thank you for your email on 9 June 2026, asking Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora for information about the National Cervical Screening Programme under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA). For clarity, I will respond to each part of your request in turn.

Response

Please refer to Appendix 1, which sets out our decision on the release of documents within scope of your request. These documents are attached as Appendix 2. Some information has been withheld under section 9(2)(g)(i) of the OIA, to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions. In making this decision, we have considered the public interest in release and determined that it does not outweigh the need to withhold.

1.1 Committee Records and Internal Correspondence. Please provide:

Any NSU clinical advisory, clinical governance, or operational committee minutes or papers, covering the period 1 January 2022 to 31 January 2024, that discussed the language used in cervical screening public communications - specifically, any discussion of the shift from "women" or "female" to "people with a cervix" in materials directed at the general public.

There has been no single shift from using 'women' or 'female' to 'people with a cervix'. 'women', 'women and people with a cervix' and 'people with a cervix' continue to be used in documents. Language around gender and sex is changed depending on the audience.

Documents 1-4 of Appendix 2 contain excerpts of minutes from Health NZ's Māori and Pacific Campaign Advisory groups (CAG). These discussions have informed our resources, and the decision to have separate rainbow resources. Additionally, we have provided the Pacific CAG report (Document 5). Excerpts are provided in accordance with section 16(1)(e) of the OIA.

Any correspondence between NSU clinical staff and the communications or health promotion team at Health New Zealand (or its predecessor, the Ministry of Health) regarding the language change in National Cervical Screening Programme (NCSP) materials.

Health NZ conducted an IT sweep to identify emails and documents related to this part of your request. This search yielded hundreds of potential results, all of which would need to be manually reviewed to identify any relevant information. The information in this question is therefore refused under section 18(f) of the OIA, as it cannot be made available without substantial collation and research.

In making this decision, we have considered extending the timeframe to respond, or charging, as allowed under the OIA. However, neither of these options have been offered as we have determined that providing this information would unreasonably interfere with the everyday functions of the teams involved.

Any clinical evidence review, literature summary, or evidence brief that informed the decision to adopt gender-neutral language in NCSP public materials.

Please refer to a focus group insights report by Wawata Creative (Document 6 of Appendix 2).

1.2 External Clinical Consultation

Please advise:

Whether any external clinical body was consulted on the language change, including but not limited to: the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG), the New Zealand College of Midwives, or the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners (RNZCGP). If so, please provide any correspondence or written advice received from those bodies.

No clinical bodies were consulted – only individuals in advisory groups. Health NZ has no evidence that RANZCOG, New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, New Zealand College of Midwives, or RNZCGP were consulted.

Part 2: Screening Coverage Data

2.1 Current Coverage Statistics

Please provide the most recent available NCSP screening coverage rates, broken down by:

- (a) Age group*
- (b) Ethnicity*
- (c) Gender identity, if currently collected by the NCSP Register*
- (d) Region or former DHB area*

This information is publicly available via the NCSP Shiny App: <https://tewhatuora.shinyapps.io/nsu-ncsp-coverage/>. Please note that we do not hold information on gender identity. That information is therefore refused under section 18(g) of the OIA as it is not held by Health NZ and we do not have grounds for believing it is held by another agency subject to the OIA.

2.2 NCSP Register - Gender Identity and Transgender Records Please advise:

Whether the NCSP Register currently records gender identity separately from biological sex for enrolled individuals.

If so, how many individuals are currently recorded as transgender male, non-binary, or another gender identity distinct from female. The number of individuals on the NCSP Register who are registered with a male gender marker but who are flagged as eligible for cervical screening.

The NCSP Register records sex assigned at birth, rather than gender identity. That information is therefore refused under section 18(g) of the OIA as it is not held by Health NZ and we do not have grounds for believing it is held by another agency subject to the OIA.

Part 3: Health Equity Analysis

3.1 Pre-adoption Assessment

Please provide any health equity impact assessment, Tiriti analysis, or population needs analysis conducted before the adoption of gender-neutral language in NCSP materials, specifically addressing:

- (a) The estimated size of the AFAB (assigned female at birth) transgender and non-binary population eligible for cervical screening in New Zealand.*
- (b) Any analysis of whether the use of gender-neutral language in cervical screening materials could reduce screening uptake among cisgender women.*
- (c) Any evidence or modelling used to conclude that inclusive language would improve screening coverage among gender-diverse people without reducing it among women.*

3.2 Invitations Policy for AFAB Transgender and Non-Binary Individuals Please provide:

The NSU's current written policy on how AFAB transgender and non-binary individuals who are enrolled on the NCSP Register with a male gender marker are invited to attend cervical screening - including whether they receive standard recall invitations, targeted outreach, or neither.

Following an extensive search, Health NZ has been unable to find the information requested in these parts. That information is therefore refused under section 18(e) of the OIA, as it does not exist, or cannot be found despite reasonable efforts to locate it.

Part 4: Parliamentary Review Committee Recommendations

4.1 Implementation Status

Please provide:

Any NSU action plan, implementation register or formal response document prepared in response to the 2021 Parliamentary Review Committee report on the NCSP, specifically regarding recommendations relating to gender-inclusive language and outreach to gender-diverse people.

Please refer to Document 7 of Appendix 2, which contains excerpts from the Parliamentary Review Committee Action Plan.

The current status of any actions arising from those recommendations, including whether any actions remain open, have been completed, or have been deferred.

Please refer to Document 8 of Appendix 2 for excerpts from: *Progress update: Implementing the recommendations of the 2021 Parliamentary Review Committee report into the National Cervical Screening Programme July 2025*. Excerpts are provided in accordance with section 16(1)(e) of the OIA.

Part 5: Complaints and Feedback

5.1 Volume and Nature of Complaints

Please provide:

The number of complaints or feedback items received by the NSU or through the NCSP between 1 January 2023 and the date of this request relating to:

(a) The removal of "women" or "female" from cervical screening materials.

(b) Gender-diverse people being excluded from, or confused by, cervical screening communications.

We identified three complaints related to question (a) and none relating to question (b). However, it is important to note that this total relating to question (a) may be an undercount as many organisations work on the National Cervical Screening Pathway, meaning not all complaints are collected centrally. It should also be noted that Health NZ has experienced several organisational and IT changes over the past few years, which may mean not all complaints have been saved in a central location. This total should be considered indicative only.

Any formal review or audit of HE1191 or HE1192 conducted after publication, including any post-publication evaluation of the materials' effectiveness or reach.

We did not identify any formal review or audit of these resources. This information is therefore refused under section 18(e) of the OIA, as it does not exist or cannot be found, despite reasonable efforts to locate it.

How to get in touch

If you have any questions, you can contact us at h.nzOIA@tewhatuora.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



Sara Freitag

Manager, Government Services

Appendix 1

Document	Date	Title	Decision on release
Document 1	19 May 2023	Māori Campaign & Resources Advisory Group (CAG) kanohi ki te kanohi	Information released as an excerpt under section 16(1)(e) of the OIA. Information deemed outside the scope of the request has been removed.
Document 2	15 December 2023	Māori Campaign & Resources Advisory Group (CAG)	Information released as an excerpt under section 16(1)(e) of the OIA. Information deemed outside the scope of the request has been removed.
Document 3	9 May 2023	Face-to-Face Pacific Campaign & Resources Advisory Group (CAG)	Information released as an excerpt under section 16(1)(e) of the OIA. Information deemed outside the scope of the request has been removed. Some information withheld under the following section of the OIA: • s9(2)(g)(i)
Document 4	13 June 2023	Pacific Campaign & Resources Advisory Group (CAG)	Information released as an excerpt under section 16(1)(e) of the OIA. Some information withheld under the following section of the OIA: • s9(2)(g)(i)
Document 5	8 June 2023	PACIFIC CAG REPORT Pacific Cervical Screening Resources Online Talanoa PHASE 1: ADAPTED ENGLISH VERSIONS CO-DESIGN	Released in full
Document 6	11 October 2023	Phase 2: Cervical screening insights presentation (Wawata Creative)	Released in full
Document 7	February 2024	Action Plan: Implementing the recommendations of the 2021 Parliamentary Review Committee Report in the NCSP	Information released as an excerpt under section 16(1)(e) of the OIA. Information deemed outside the scope of the request has been removed.

Document 8	July 2025	Progress update Implementing the recommendations of the 2021 Parliamentary Review Committee report into the National Cervical Screening Programme July 2025	Information released as an excerpt under section 16(1)(e) of the OIA.
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