

31 October 2023

s9(2)(a)



Thank you for your request of 5 July 2023 to Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities, for the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

Can I please have the following information relating to Waiata sessions and Mihi Whakatau

Participation:

- *Can any member of staff participate in Waiata sessions?*
- *Is participation voluntary or mandatory?*
- *Approximately how many staff members usually participate in each session?*

Timing & Duration:

- *Are Waiata sessions held during regular office hours?*
- *If so, do these sessions count towards a staff member's contracted hours?*
- *How long does each Waiata session typically last?*

Costs:

- *What are the associated costs to the department or ministry for holding Waiata sessions? Please include any external resources, venues, or other associated costs.*

Purpose & Objectives:

- *What are the stated objectives or purposes behind holding the Waiata sessions?*
- *How do these sessions contribute to the ministry or department's broader goals or strategic initiatives?*

Feedback & Evaluation:

- *Is there any feedback mechanism in place for staff to provide their opinions or suggestions regarding the Waiata sessions?*
- *Have there been any evaluations or assessments of the impact or effectiveness of these sessions?*

Training & Expertise:

- *Are there any staff members with specific qualifications or expertise who lead or facilitate these sessions?*
- *If external experts or facilitators are brought in, what are the associated costs?*

Frequency & Scheduling:

- *How often are these sessions held (e.g., weekly, monthly)?*

Resources & Materials:

- *Are there any materials or resources provided to staff for these sessions?*
- *If so, what is the cost associated with these resources?*

Also, may I ask about Waiata meetings:

- *Could you please provide a list of meetings where the subject or primary topic of discussion was "Waiata" or "singing" since 1 August 2022 to 1 August 2023?*

For each of these meetings, please specify:

- *The date of the meeting.*
- *The number of people who attended.*
- *The department or departments represented at the meeting.*

Duration:

- *Kindly also indicate the duration of each of these meetings.*
If possible, I would also appreciate any additional details that can be shared about the outcomes of these meetings.

Do you host Mihi Whakatau for new staff members?

When does this practice occur for all new staff members and when this practice

started.

- *Is it compulsory for staff to attend?*
- *Do interns attend and do they also receive Mihi Whakatau?*
- *Does Mihi Wakatau occur during work hours?*
- *How many people attend on average?*
- *How long does it last?*
- *Are there catering costs associated with the event? If so, what are they and how much has been spent so far this year?*
- *Could you provide details on any seating or speaking arrangements during the Mihi Whakatau? Specifically, how does Kāinga Ora approach traditional roles and customs related to gender during these ceremonies?*

Māori culture is embedded in our organisation. The Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities Act 2019 section 14 (k) includes partnering and having early and meaningful engagement with Māori and offering Māori opportunities to participate in urban development. Section 14 of the Public Service Act also requires Kāinga Ora (and other government agencies) to support the Crown's relationship with Māori under the Treaty of Waitangi (te Tiriti o Waitangi). Building cultural competence is about increasing awareness, building knowledge, acquiring the right skills, learning appropriate behaviours and developing the right attitudes to value diversity and include everyone. It is important that we all take on the responsibility to do the work.

It is expected that organisations will authorise time for individuals and teams to fully engage with their cultural competence learning. Organisations should celebrate the value that increasing their cultural competence brings and acknowledge it as an important step towards building a truly diverse and inclusive Public Service. Kāinga Ora staff are provided with the opportunity to continue with their te reo Māori journey through He Kōanga Manu, which is part of our Mātauranga Māori programme. This enables staff to choose to participate in waiata sessions throughout the organisation. The sessions are a voluntary activity; no formal feedback or evaluation is available.

When a new staff member starts their journey at Kāinga Ora, the appointing manager or staff member can request to conduct a Mihi Whakatau. This is at the discretion of the manager and participation is voluntary at every level. The seating and speaking arrangements are at the discretion of the individual teams. Kāinga Ora does not have any specific guidelines for Mihi Whakatau or any approach to traditional gender roles and customs throughout the Mihi Whakatau.

Any associated costs with waiata sessions and Mihi Whakatau are authorised by the local managers.

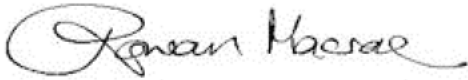
Providing the majority of information sought in your request would involve a prohibitive amount of manual collation, as information that may exist is not centrally held and would require 40 Kāinga Offices to search for a range of information that may be held, including information in calendar invitations, email inboxes, financial information for costs incurred and other information that may be in scope (including varying process and practices across the country).

[REDACTED] would remove staff from their core duties for a substantial period of time, which is not in the public interest in the effective and efficient administration of the Department. I consider that extending the timeframe and charging for the information available to you. Therefore, your request is refused as the information requested cannot be made available without

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

Please note that Kāinga Ora proactively releases its responses to official information requests where possible. Our response to your request may be published at <https://kaingaora.govt.nz/publications/official-information-requests/>, with your personal information removed.

Nāku noa, nā



Rowan Macrae
General Manager, People, Governance and Capability