



Te Kawa Mataaho
Public Service Commission

Official Information Forum

15 November 2021

*Microphones off please,
cameras optional*



Agenda

1.00pm Welcome & housekeeping

1.10am Panel discussion – procurement and the OIA

Ministries of Defence, Health, and Business, Innovation and Employment

1.45am Update on workforce mobility work

Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission

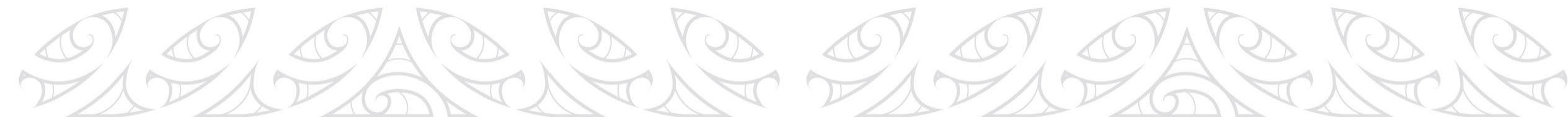
2.00pm New information search policy guidance from Archives NZ

Te Kawa Mataaho

2.10pm Reflect on 2021, plan for 2022

Te Kawa Mataaho

2.30pm Thanks and close





Panel Discussion

Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

Ministry of Defence

Ministry of Health



Workforce mobility

Te Kawa Mataaho



New information search policy guidance from Archives NZ

Te Kawa Mataaho

How to develop an OIA information search policy

Information and records are evidence of an organisation's actions, decisions and processes, and may be subject to requests for access or to official scrutiny

The Public Records Act 2005 (PRA) requires the creation of full and accurate records

Organisations are expected to know where and how their information assets are held so they can be appropriately accessed and used

An information search policy provides guidance and support for staff working in organisations who may be involved in undertaking a search for information within the scope of an OIA request



How to develop an OIA information search policy

A record of searches is useful, particularly when managing complex requests or when later explaining the search that was undertaken

If a person who makes an OIA request subsequently complains to the Ombudsmen, it is the organisation who bears the onus of establishing that all reasonable steps have been taken to find the requested information before refusing access on the basis that the information provided represents the full extent of the information held, or the information cannot be found or does not exist (s.18(e) OIA).



Benefits of an information search policy

An information search policy:

- helps organisations meet regulatory requirements, and the accountability expectations of government and the public
- promotes good information and records management practices
- provides best practice guidance for staff on where they are expected to search for information and how to do so
- contributes to efficient OIA searches
- supports internal monitoring for compliance



What to consider

While the OIA does not impose explicit information and records management requirements on organisations, the PRA does mandate that public sector organisations create and maintain full and accurate records of their affairs, and that these are identifiable, retrievable, accessible and useable

An information search policy should provide internal guidance for staff in circumstances, including:

- where the requested information is incomplete or inaccurate
- where the information has been legally destroyed
- the extent to which staff responsible for processing OIA requests have full permissions and access to information held by the organisation or can gain access as required



Reasonable steps checklist

These steps include:

- going back to the requestor if there are genuine difficulties in identifying what information is within scope of the request
- identifying who within the organisation may have the appropriate level of institutional knowledge and/or recordkeeping skills and training to undertake the search.
- searching all reasonably likely locations where information may be located should be searched by an organization (examples are given)



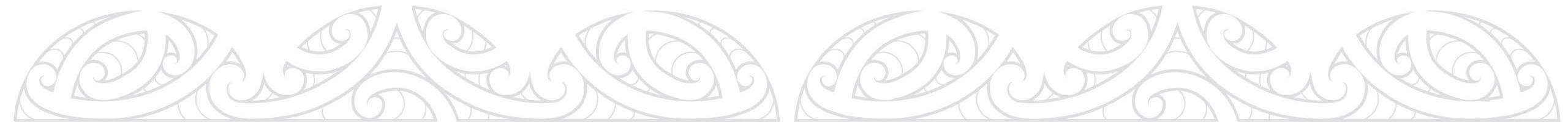
Record keeping

Archives New Zealand has developed a template to assist organisations in documenting the steps taken in locating information within the scope of an OIA request

Although communicating the steps undertaken to find information is not a requirement under the OIA, organisations may choose to outline these in the response letter, in particular if the request is being refused under section 18(e) or (f)

A template is included as the last page of the guidance:

[How to develop an OIA information search policy](#)



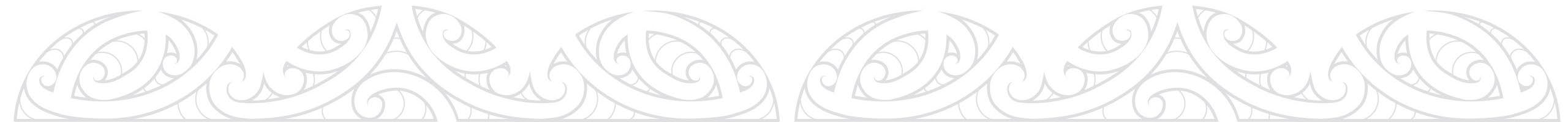


Reflect on 2021, plan for 2022

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What we've done in 2021

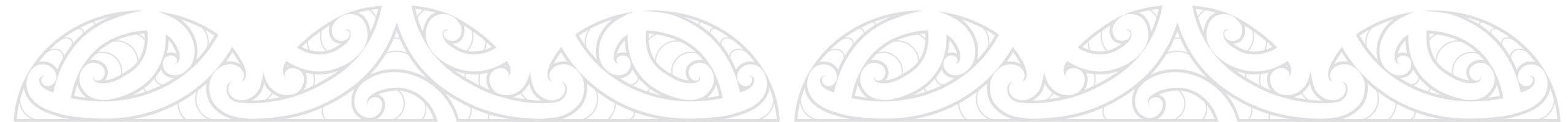
- OIA timeliness has stayed over 97% in the last two reporting periods despite almost 40% increase in volumes and demands of Covid response
- The number of agencies publishing OIA responses has increased over 40% in that time
- More than 90 agencies have attended Official Information Forum events so far in 2021
- Over 700 registrations across six sessions year to date, including today
- That includes 250 “new practitioners”



What we've done in 2021

In these Forum events we've covered:

- proactive release
- information management at a system and agency level
- workforce mobility
- redaction tools and techniques
- OIA statistics
- procurement and the OIA
- information search guidance
- and introduced the new learning and agency development team at the Office of the Ombudsman



Possible Forum sessions for 2022

What would you like to cover in 2022?

- Long-term Insights Briefings as required in Schedule 6 of the Public Service Act, and the requirement to publicly consult on these
- Managing complex requests
- Managing requester relationships
- Suggestions for guest speakers welcome

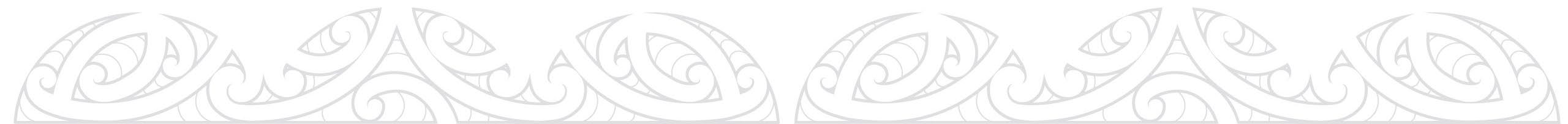


OIA statistics

The Public Service Commissioner has asked that statistics on the time to respond to requests, currently reported to Parliament, become part of our regular reporting in the coming year

The intention is that this will be a centralisation exercise of existing information, to improve access and visibility, rather than a creation of new measures

As we've seen with the OIA statistics we've published to date, we expect this will over time produce a more standardised and consistent set of data



Web Standards clinics

Free two hour “drop in” clinics (in person or online) held fortnightly by DIA

For anyone delivering digital services with an emphasis on best practice and practical solutions

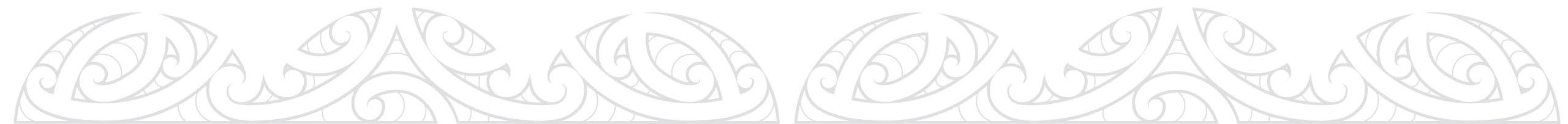
Bring your questions and challenges, general or specific, about:

- web accessibility, and
- how to implement the New Zealand Government Web Standards

Three more dates this year:

- 18 November, 2 December, 16 December

Contact web.standards@dia.govt.nz



Here to help

If you need advice or assistance, contact the team on OIAForum@publicservice.govt.nz

Or check out the online resources:
<http://publicservice.govt.nz/official-information>





Final questions?



Ngā mihi nui

Ka kite anō