



Te Kawa Mataaho

Public Service Commission

24 November 2025

9(2)(a) privacy

9(2)(a) privacy

Official Information Request

Our Ref: OIA 2025-0145

I refer to your official information request received on 7 November 2025 for:

1. *Copies of any documents, briefings, emails, messages, file notes, or other correspondence held by the Public Service Commission (PSC) relating to any concern raised by a government department about whether the PSC's paid social media advertising connected to the 23 October 2025 public sector industrial action complied with government social media or political neutrality guidance.*
2. *The name of the government department that raised the concern and the date and time that concern was first communicated to the PSC.*
3. *A copy of the concern raised including whether it related to political neutrality, paid promotion, tone, timing, or any other issue.*
4. *Any internal PSC assessments, advice, or correspondence (including with legal, communications, or ethics teams) about that concern, and any advice received from other agencies such as the Department of Internal Affairs or the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.*
5. *Any records of when and how the Minister for the Public Service, her office, or the Prime Minister's Office were informed of the concern, and any subsequent communications with those offices about it.*
6. *Any documentation showing what actions the PSC took in response to the concern, for example, pausing, altering, or maintaining the advertising, or providing assurances about compliance.*
7. *Any post-campaign review, audit, or internal analysis assessing whether the PSC's October 2025 advertising complied with political neutrality and social media guidance, including any findings or recommendations.*
8. *Any record, note, or explanation within the PSC relating to decisions about whether or not to publicly identify the department that raised the concern, or to disclose related details.*

For ease of reference, we have listed each of your questions and provided our responses directly underneath.

“1. Copies of any documents, briefings, emails, messages, file notes, or other correspondence held by the Public Service Commission (PSC) relating to any concern raised by a government department about whether the PSC’s paid social media advertising connected to the 23 October 2025 public sector industrial action complied with government social media or political neutrality guidance.

2. The name of the government department that raised the concern and the date and time that concern was first communicated to the PSC.

3. A copy of the concern raised including whether it related to political neutrality, paid promotion, tone, timing, or any other issue.”

In regards to parts one – three of your request, please find enclosed the following document:

Item	Date	Document Description	Decision
1	19 October 2025	Email from the Department of Internal Affairs ‘PSC Facebook ad - industrial action’	Release in part

I have decided to release the document listed above, subject to information being withheld under one or more of the following sections of the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), as applicable:

- section 9(2)(a) – to protect the privacy of natural persons.
- section 9(2)(g)(ii) – to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the protection of such Ministers, members of organisations, officers, and employees from improper pressure or harassment.

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the OIA. The need to protect the privacy of this individual outweighs any public interest in the release of this information.

“4. Any internal PSC assessments, advice, or correspondence (including with legal, communications, or ethics teams) about that concern, and any advice received from other agencies such as the Department of Internal Affairs or the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.”

I am refusing this part of your question under section 18(e) of the OIA as the information requested does not exist.

“5. Any records of when and how the Minister for the Public Service, her office, or the Prime Minister’s Office were informed of the concern, and any subsequent communications with those offices about it.”

On 23 October 2025, the Minister for the Public Service received Written Parliamentary Questions (WPQs) 2025 51004 for response. The WPQ asked:

“Have any Ministers, Ministerial offices, or government departments raised concerns, provided feedback, or discussed the Public Service Commission’s advertising campaign in relation to its political neutrality or departure from previous practice?”.

On 30 October 2025, the Commission provided the Minister for the Public Service’s Office with the following draft response by uploading it to a shared system:

“The Public Service Commission advised that one government department raised a concern as to whether the advertising contravenes social media guidance”.

Regarding the latter part of question 5:

“.. any subsequent communications with those offices about it”

Please find enclosed the following document:

Item	Date	Document Description	Decision
2	6 November 2025	Email to the Minister for the Public Service’s office – Media lines regarding the email of concern	Release in part

I have decided to release the document listed above, subject to information being withheld under one or more of the following sections OIA, as applicable:

- section 9(2)(a) – to protect the privacy of natural persons.

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the OIA. The need to protect the privacy of this individual outweighs any public interest in the release of this information.

“6. Any documentation showing what actions the PSC took in response to the concern, for example, pausing, altering, or maintaining the advertising, or providing assurances about compliance.

7. Any post-campaign review, audit, or internal analysis assessing whether the PSC’s October 2025 advertising complied with political neutrality and social media guidance, including any findings or recommendations.

8. Any record, note, or explanation within the PSC relating to decisions about whether or not to publicly identify the department that raised the concern, or to disclose related details.”

We are refusing parts five to eight of your request under section 18(e) of the OIA as the information requested does not exist.

Information being withheld

In this response, we have not included documents or correspondence that we have deemed administrative in nature, this includes:

- the email from DIA being forwarded on within the Commission as an ‘FYI’, and a draft response being requested
- a notification to the Minister’s office that a draft WPQ response had been uploaded into a shared system
- pages containing only signature block graphics.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact Enquiries@publicservice.govt.nz.

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

Please note that we intend to publish this letter (with your personal details removed) and enclosed documents on the Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission’s website.

Yours sincerely



Nicky Dirks
Manager – Ministerial and Executive Services
Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission

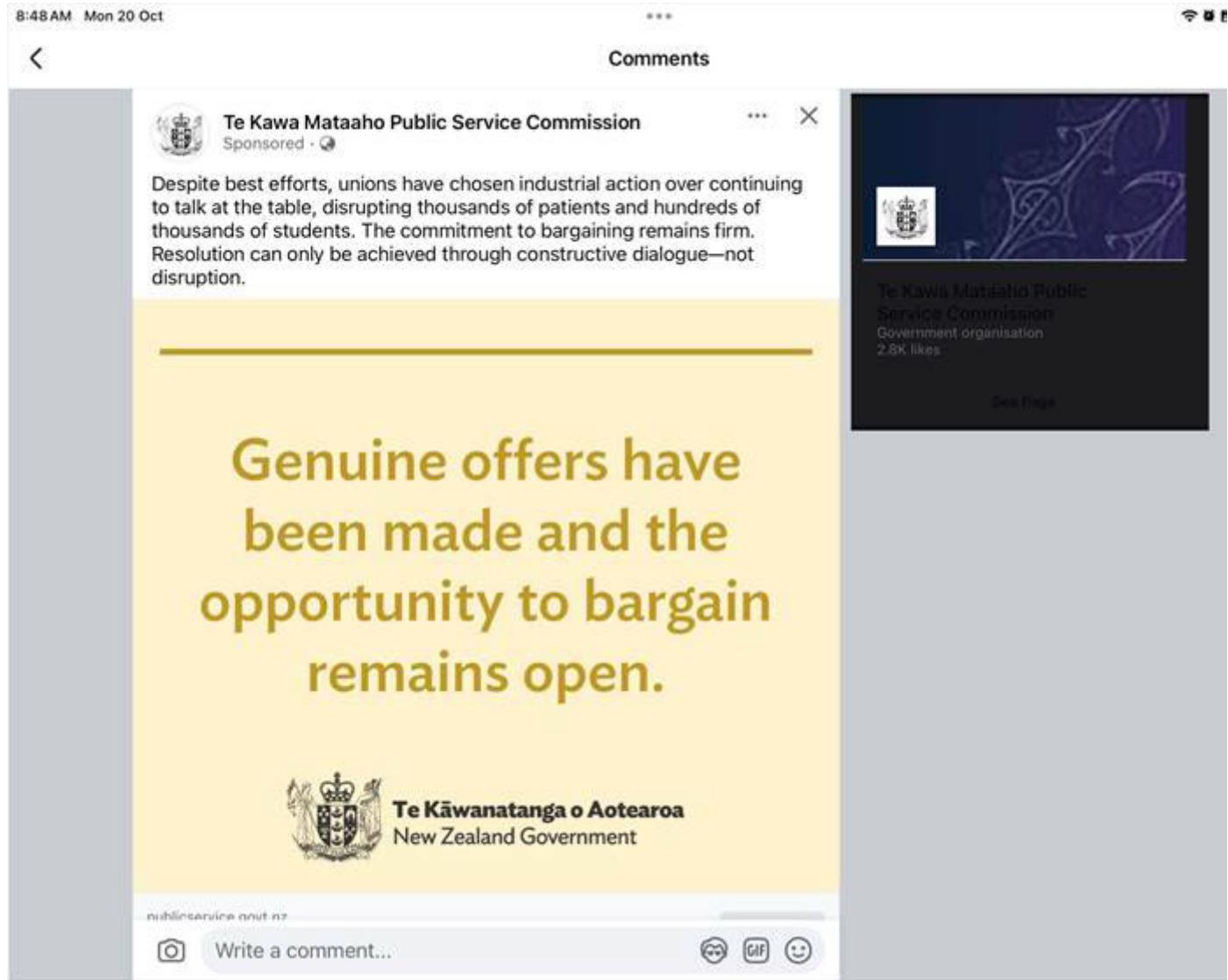
Document 1:

From: 9(2)(g)(ii) harassment [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, October 19, 2025 10:16:57 PM (UTC+00:00) Monrovia, Reykjavik
To: Grahame Armstrong <grahame.armstrong@publicservice.govt.nz>
Cc: Media Internal Affairs <media@dia.govt.nz>; PSC Media <media@publicservice.govt.nz>; Andy Cameron <Andy.Cameron@dia.govt.nz>
Subject: PSC Facebook ad - industrial action

This email was sent from someone outside of Te Kawa Mataaho. Please take extra care.

Kia ora Grahame, hope you're well.

A colleague sent me this screen shot of an ad they were shown on Facebook:



They were concerned it was either not genuine or contravened social media guidance:

[Guidance for public servants' official use of social media - Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission](#)

Apparently the image had a link to the PSC website with information about the strike action.

9(2)(g)(ii) [REDACTED] | Senior Communications Advisor
harassment [REDACTED]
Department of Internal Affairs | Te Tari Taiwhenua
m: 9(2)(a) privacy [REDACTED]
45 Pipitea Street | PO Box 805, Wellington 6140, New Zealand
dia.govt.nz | [Facebook](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

From: Grahame Armstrong
Sent: Thursday, 6 November 2025 12:53 pm
To: Misty Mossman; Alex Chadwick; Gabrielle Wilson; Heather Baggott; Hugo Vitalis; Josh Masson; Kate Salmon; MAES; Nicky Dirks; PSC Media; Rob Anderson; Sarah Borrell; Sarah Metwell; Thor Gudjonsson
Subject: RE: URGENT MEDIA QUERY - PSC's Facebook ads

Categories: Completed in Sharepoint

The Commission did not seek approval from the PMO or Minister Collins, but it provided a heads up. It is standard practice for agencies to give Ministers prior notice of external communications material that is issued or to be published.

The Commission was providing public information on an issue of public interest.

Regardless of the concerns raised, the Commission has assured me it took all reasonable steps to ensure the ads adhered to government advertising standards.

NOTE: For context, a staff member (not the CE) at DIA raised concerns via the DIA comms team. It was an email which the DIA comms team forwarded to the Commission. It wasn't a complaint, it simply asked whether the ads were within social media guidelines.

Grahame Armstrong
Principal Media Advisor
waea pukoro: ^{9(2)(a) privacy} | imera: grahame.armstrong@publicservice.govt.nz



From: Misty Mossman <Misty.Mossman@parliament.govt.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 6 November 2025 11:19 am
To: Alex Chadwick <alex.chadwick@publicservice.govt.nz>; Gabrielle Wilson <gabrielle.wilson@publicservice.govt.nz>; Heather Baggott <heather.baggott@publicservice.govt.nz>; Hugo Vitalis <hugo.vitalis@publicservice.govt.nz>; Josh Masson <josh.masson@publicservice.govt.nz>; Kate Salmon <kate.salmon@publicservice.govt.nz>; MAES <maes@publicservice.govt.nz>; Nicky Dirks <nicky.dirks@publicservice.govt.nz>; PSC Media <media@publicservice.govt.nz>; Rob Anderson <robert.anderson@publicservice.govt.nz>; Sarah Borrell <sarah.borrell@publicservice.govt.nz>; Sarah Metwell <sarah.metwell@publicservice.govt.nz>; Thor Gudjonsson <thor.gudjonsson@publicservice.govt.nz>
Subject: URGENT MEDIA QUERY - PSC's Facebook ads
Importance: High

This email was sent from someone outside of Te Kawa Mataaho. Please take extra care.

Good morning

Could we please have a draft response to the query below by 1.30pm today please?

Thanks

Misty



Misty Mossman

Private Secretary (Public Service) | Office of Hon Judith Collins KC MP

Member of Parliament for Papakura

Attorney-General | Minister of Defence | Minister for Digitising Government | Minister for the Public Service | Minister Responsible for the GCSB | Minister Responsible for the NZSIS | Minister for Space

Mobile: 9(2)(a) privacy

Email: Misty.Mossman@parliament.govt.nz Website: www.Beehive.govt.nz
Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

From: Sharon Lundy <Sharon.Lundy@parliament.govt.nz>

Sent: Thursday, 6 November 2025 11:15 am

To: Misty Mossman <Misty.Mossman@parliament.govt.nz>

Cc: Erica Julian <Erica.Julian@parliament.govt.nz>; Anna Bebbington <Anna.Bebbington@parliament.govt.nz>

Subject: FW:

Hi Misty

Could I have a draft response to the below, as discussed.

And for clarity, the office knew there was to be social media – not paid advertising.

Thanks,

Sharon



Sharon Lundy

Senior Press Secretary | Office of Hon Judith Collins KC MP

Member of Parliament for Papakura

Attorney-General | Minister of Defence | Minister for Digitising Government | Minister for the Public Service | Minister Responsible for the GCSB | Minister Responsible for the NZSIS | Minister for Space

Mobile: 9(2)(a)

Email: Sharon.Lundy@parliament.govt.nz Website: www.Beehive.govt.nz
Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

From: Lloyd Burr <lloyd.burr@stuffdigital.co.nz>

Sent: Thursday, 6 November 2025 10:55 AM

To: Sharon Lundy <Sharon.Lundy@parliament.govt.nz>

Subject:

Hi Sharon,

Just after some clarification to these WPQ answers re: the PSC's Facebook ads.

Did the PSC run the ads past both Collins and Luxon before they ran? If so, what form did that take? Was it just a heads up or were they seeking approval?

And which government department raised a concern about the ads possibly breaching social media guidance?

Written answers are all good.

Cheers,

Lloyd.

Reply 50726 (2025) has been answered

Portfolio: Public Service (Hon Collins)

Question: Were any Ministers, Ministerial offices, or other government departments consulted or informed prior to the Public Service Commission publishing advertisements regarding industrial action by public sector workers, if so, who, and when?

Reply: The Public Service Commission's communications strategy regarding the industrial action held on 23 October 2025 was discussed with the Prime Minister and myself and our offices prior to the Commission's advertisements being published. The Public Service Commission later informed my office and asked us to inform the PMO prior of the specific advertising going live. The Commission also worked with relevant government agencies for content included in the advertising.

Reply 51004 (2025) has been answered

Portfolio: Public Service (Hon Collins)

Question: Have any Ministers, Ministerial offices, or government departments raised concerns, provided feedback, or discussed the Public Service Commission's advertising campaign in relation to its political neutrality or departure from previous practice?

Reply: The Public Service Commission advised that one government department raised a concern as to whether the advertising contravenes social media guidance.

[51004 \(2025\)](#)

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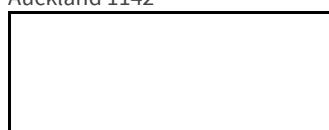
Lloyd Burr

Explainer Editor + Political Reporter

NOTE: My email has changed to lloyd.burr@stuffdigital.co.nz.

9(2)(a) privacy

Level 7 Cider Building,
4 Williamson Ave,
Grey Lynn, Auckland 1021
PO Box 6341,
Victoria St West,
Auckland 1142



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