



22 June 2026

9(2)(a) privacy

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Official Information Request
Our Ref: OIA 2026-0132

I refer to your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request received by the Public Service Commission Te Kawa Mataaho (the Commission) on 20 May 2026. As we advised you on 21 May 2026, we have scoped this as:

1. *Correspondence relating to the Public Service Ministers' directive to investigate the New Zealand Government Identity (including any findings) – to and from both Minister Collins and Minister Goldsmith*
2. *Correspondence about the standardised use of the Coat of Arms, including any exceptions*
3. *Any findings relating to drivers of rebranding costs or savings (excluding the publicly released 2026 guidelines)*
4. *A copy of the Public Service Commissioner's letter to Chief Executives about rebranding costs*
5. *Any responses received to that letter.*

On 21 May 2026, we advised you that the overall policy and guidance on the use of the Coat of Arms is overseen by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, and enquired whether you would like us to transfer that part of the request. You confirmed that you were seeking to find out “*When reviewing the branding guidelines [...] if the standardisation model of agency's moving to only the coat of arms was considered by the PSC*”. We have therefore scoped part 2 of your request as “*Any correspondence related to whether the standardisation model of agency's moving to only the coat of arms was considered by the PSC, including any exceptions*”.

On 17 June 2026, we notified you that we had extended our time to respond to 26 June 2026.

For ease of reference, we have listed each of your requests (numbered 1 – 5) and provided our responses directly underneath.

Part 1: Correspondence relating to the Public Service Ministers' directive to investigate the New Zealand Government Identity (including any findings) – to and from both Minister Collins and Minister Goldsmith

Information being released

Please find enclosed the following documents:

Item	Date	Document Description	Decision
1	5 February 2026	Letter to Hon Judith Collins from the Taxpayers' Union	Released in full
2	16 March 2026	Letter to Taxpayers' Union from Hon Judith Collins	Released in full
3	26 March 2026	Letter from Hon Judith Collins to Crown Entity Board Chairs	Released in full

Part 2: Any correspondence related to whether the standardisation model of agencies moving to only the coat of arms was considered by the PSC, including any exceptions

The Commission does not hold any correspondence about considering a standardised model of agencies moving to only the coat of arms as part of the New Zealand Government Identity, and we are therefore refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) of the OIA on the grounds the information requested does not exist. However, the scope of a review of the New Zealand Government Identity Policy and Guidelines remains under active consideration.

Part 3: Any findings relating to drivers of rebranding costs or savings (excluding the publicly released 2026 guidelines)

Following receipt of the Taxpayers' Union letter to Hon Judith Collins in March 2026, the Commission made enquiries with both the Department of Internal Affairs and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

The Department of Internal Affairs responded via email on 16 March 2026:

“Probably the best background to the change is in this OIA (we got OIA-ed a few times about the change late last year): [OIA-2526-0209.pdf](#). In a nutshell, the logo was updated inhouse and then applied to everything electronic. Changes to physical logos (on cars, buildings etc) will be made as part of the regular renewal process. So far, this has only applied to about a dozen pull-up banners. Nothing else has come up for renewal yet. The briefing we provided Min van Velden about options has also been publicly released and is here: [OIA-2526-0112.pdf](#) (it's the first appendix).

For your reference, we have provided the two links above in the table below for ease of access.

Item	Date	Document Description	Website Address
4	16 September 2025	Department of Internal Affairs Official Information Act Response: OIA2526-0209	https://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/Files/OIA-Releases-2026/\$file/OIA-2526-0209.pdf
5	19 August 2025	Department of Internal Affairs Official Information Act Response: OIA2526-0112	https://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/Files/OIA-Releases-2025/\$file/OIA-2526-0112.pdf

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) provided a letter of response following our enquiry. Please find this enclosed:

Item	Date	Document Description	Decision
6	18 March 2026	Letter from the New Zealand Qualifications Authority to the Public Service Commission	Released in full

Some text has been marked as out of scope in the letter from NZQA where it does not relate to rebranding costs.

Part 4 and 5: A copy of the Public Service Commissioner's letter to Chief Executives about rebranding costs and any responses received to that letter

The Public Service Commissioner did not write to chief executives about rebranding costs, so we are refusing these parts of your request under section 18(e) of the OIA on the grounds the information requested does not exist. The Public Service Commissioner instead raised this matter verbally at a meeting with Public Service Chief Executives.

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 response (with your personal details removed) on the Commission's website.

Yours sincerely



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

out of scope

From: Rhys Hurley <rhys@taxpayers.org.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 5 February 2026 1:37 PM
To: Judith Collins (MIN) <J.Collins@ministers.govt.nz>
Subject: JC-COR-PS-058 Letter to Minister Collins

Good Afternoon

Attached is a letter for consideration by Minister Collins.

Best Regards,

Rhys Hurley

Investigations Coordinator | New Zealand Taxpayers' Union | Auckland Ratepayers' Alliance

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We stand for Lower Taxes, Less Waste, and More Accountability across all levels of government. If you like what we do, join the [Taxpayers' Union](#) or the [Auckland Ratepayers' Alliance](#).



Hon Judith Collins KC
Minister for the Public Service
By email: J.Collins@ministers.govt.nz

5 February 2026

Dear Minister Collins,

Public service rebranding and policy changes

1. We write to you regarding ongoing concerns about public service rebranding costs.
2. Recent examples uncovered include NZQA's \$2.9 million blowout, the \$270,000 by the new Crown Research Institutes and Callaghan Innovation's \$170,000 overhaul.
3. The 2021 Identity Policy and Guidelines were intended to promote use of the New Zealand Coat of Arms as the official government logo, improving unity and transparency. However, the guidelines appear to have been interpreted as permitting dual or agency-specific branding, resulting in duplicated design work, repeated website refreshes, and unnecessary ongoing costs.
4. The UK and Australia have already adopted standardised logos using their respective coats of arms. While Minister van Velden had Internal Affairs change at a minimum cost to taxpayer.
5. We ask the Minister to consider updating these guidelines so only tightly defined exceptions be permitted, where operational or cultural considerations may justify distinct branding.
6. This would be a simple, low-cost reform that delivers long-term savings and a more unified public service.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,
New Zealand Taxpayers' Union Inc.

Rhys Hurley
Investigations Coordinator
rhys@taxpayers.org.nz

Office of Hon Judith Collins KC

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



JC-COR-PS-058

16 March 2026

Rhys Hurley
rhys@taxpayers.org.nz

Dear Mr Hurley

Thank you for your letter of 5 February about the New Zealand Government Identity Policy and Guidelines (the Guidelines). You have asked me to consider requiring agencies to use the New Zealand Coat of Arms and allow only tightly defined exceptions for operational or cultural considerations.

The Guidelines apply to all Public Service departments, departmental agencies, interdepartmental ventures, interdepartmental executive boards, and Crown agents. Public Service Agencies listed in the Guidelines and Crown agents may use identity options that include the Coat of Arms, while other Crown entities and agencies in the wider public sector can use the NZ Government logo mark without the Coat of Arms if they wish, or as invited by the responsible Minister.

I have asked officials to look into the Guidelines and assess what might drive additional costs or savings when agencies rebrand. This will include examining any lessons learned from NZQA and the Department of Internal Affairs, before considering whether further adjustments to the Guidelines are needed.

If agencies experience structural changes that require rebranding, the Government and the public expect taxpayer money to be spent carefully and in accordance with the Guidelines. The Public Service Commissioner will remind chief executives of the need to be mindful of the fiscal environment, and to learn from other agencies' experiences of rebranding to avoid undue costs. I will also share these expectations with Board Chairs.

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Judith Collins'.

Hon Judith Collins KC
Minister for the Public Service

Office of Hon Judith Collins KC

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



Dear [Chair]

I have been made aware of examples where public sector agencies have incurred substantial costs when rebranding.

It is this Government's priority that agencies focus on delivering more effective frontline services to New Zealanders, and that agencies make good use of taxpayer dollars.

If agencies experience structural changes that require rebranding, the Government and the public expect them to use taxpayer funds carefully and avoid unnecessary costs. Recent projects by public agencies have suggested that cost-effective implementation can be supported by:

- making changes to digital assets and channels in-house where practicable; and
- updating branding on physical assets, such as signage and published material at the point of replacement.

Please ensure your chief executives are mindful of the fiscal environment, minimise unnecessary expenditure associated with rebranding, and learn from other agencies' experiences to avoid undue costs.

Thank you for your leadership and ongoing commitment to delivering value for New Zealanders.

Yours sincerely,

Hon Judith Collins KC
Minister for the Public Service

18 March 2026

Robert Jordan
Strategy, Policy, and Integrity
Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission
Robert.Jordan@publicservice.govt.nz

Tēnā koe Robert

Thank you for your email of 16 March, about the cost of NZQA's rebranding work from 2021-2023.

I have addressed each of your questions below.

The costs associated with NZQA's rebranding exercise

As contained in [our answers to Select Committee questions](#), NZQA conducted a rebranding exercise across 2021/22 and 2022/23, with a total cost of \$151,031.

This was split across two financial years as the bulk of rebranding work was done prior to 30 June 2022, with the remainder completed after 1 July 2022. The timespan reflects prioritisation of the material that needed updating, and that changes to some documents and systems (such as those involved in running examinations) are best made at certain times of the year.

Through this work, NZQA's visual identity was updated to be relevant, modern and improve accessibility, particularly for people with visual impairments or colour blindness.

The rebranding work delivered a refreshed logo, new brand fonts, accessible colours, a range of culturally appropriate patterns, and a selection of complex or notable templates (such as for PowerPoint presentations and New Zealand Records of Achievement). More straightforward templates – such as those for letterheads and reports – were updated in-house using the logo, fonts and colours provided.

This mix of outsourced and in-house development, along with only refreshing the visual identity of material as it became due for updating, reprinting or renewal, helped to manage rebranding costs.

The only subsequent cost for rebranding work is \$2,019 (ex GST), incurred in October 2025. This reflects an updated logo placed on the wall of NZQA's office reception. This sign is visible to all external visitors arriving at NZQA's office and is typically used as the backdrop for official photos with international visitors. The delay in updating this signage reflects that it was not urgent, but it is important for presenting NZQA consistently.

Options considered, the criteria against which those options were assessed

Three primary options around rebranding were considered:

1. undertaking rebranding work 'in-house';
2. deferring or not undertaking rebranding work; or
3. undertaking rebranding work alongside the redevelopment of our website.

NZQA was unable to undertake rebranding work 'in-house' as we did not have the in-house graphic design skills and knowledge required.

Since groups with these specialist skills (including an indigenous design agency and accessibility expertise) were being contracted for the design of the website, it made sense to draw on their experience for NZQA's broader visual identity at the same time. Deferring or not undertaking rebranding work would have resulted in needing to re-contract these skills later, with additional procurement costs. This option would have also resulted in additional costs for adjusting the new website to accommodate new brand elements.

NZQA therefore took the option of procuring rebranding services alongside the website design and development. To achieve this, NZQA conducted a closed Request for Quotes (RFQ) combining both areas of work, using the All-of-Government panel. We received two applications, and our RFQ documentation (including the criteria on which we chose a vendor) is attached.

Whether the New Zealand Identity Policy and Guidance was considered

NZQA's Communications lead considered whether the New Zealand Government Identity could be used instead of a separate NZQA visual identity.

He considered whether the New Zealand Government Identity would be seen as relevant and engaging by NZQA's diverse audiences – particularly secondary school students working towards NCEA, who are one of NZQA's primary audience groups.

He also looked at whether using the New Zealand Government Identity would constrain NZQA's ability to adjust branding to meet the wide range of situations in which it is used.

On the basis of this consideration, the New Zealand Government Identity was seen as not being a good fit for NZQA.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to be in contact.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grant Klinkum', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dr Grant Klinkum
Chief Executive
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Cc: Robert Anderson, Kevin Jenkins