



9 July 2026

9(2)(a) privacy

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Official Information Request
Our Ref: OIA 2026-0171

I refer to your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request received by the Public Service Commission Te Kawa Mataaho (the Commission) on 11 June 2026 for information on the review of strike action social media messaging (the Review) conducted by Ms Jane Meares. For ease of reference, we have listed each of your requests (numbered 1 – 11) and provided our responses directly underneath.

Information being released - requests one and two

- 1. A copy of the Commission's internal social media Policy referred to in reply 20508 (2026), as it was in force between 18 and 22 October 2025.*
- 2. A copy of the current internal social media Policy, if it differs from the version above.*

In response to requests one and two, please find enclosed the following document.

Item	Date	Document Description	Decision
1	May 2022	Public Service Commission Internal Policy: Social Media Policy	Released in full

Please note the Policy is due to be reviewed, however this has been delayed until the completion of the Review in case there are any recommendations to incorporate.

Information does not exist – request three

- 3. Any record of amendments made to that policy since 1 October 2025, including the date of and reason for each amendment.*

The Commission's internal social media policy has not been updated since 1 October 2025, so I am refusing part three of your request under section 18(e) of the OIA on the grounds the information requested does not exist.

Information publicly available – requests four and five

4. Records sufficient to identify the position of the person who authorised the expenditure of public funds to boost or promote the Commission's social media messages between 18 and 22 October 2025, and the delegation or financial authority relied upon.

5. Any internal approval, sign-off, or delegation record relating to that expenditure.

Financial approval was given on 17 October 2025 on the basis that there was appropriate oversight of any boosted posts “to ensure compliance with the advertising guidance”. The approval of funds is a separate matter from approving the content of the posts.

The following information is covered by request 4 and 5 and is publicly available on the Commission’s website at the link provided for in the table below.

Item	Date	Document Description	Website Address
2	17 October 2025	Email titled ‘Budget request: Social Media Boosting Budget Proposal – Coordinated Strikes Communications’	https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/OIA-2025-0130-Social-Media-Advertisements-campaigning-against-strike-action.pdf (refer page 130)

Names and positions have been removed from this email and should continue to be withheld under the OIA, on the grounds described in the documents. However, we can confirm that approval of spending was in line with the Commission’s delegation policy.

Information being released – request six

6. The total amount paid or invoiced to the reviewer and to any external legal or other advisers in connection with the Jane Meares review, as at the date this request is received, broken down by provider and by category.

The amount paid to Ms Jane Meares as at 11 June 2026 is \$45,000.00 excluding GST. No other external legal or other advisers have been paid in relation to this review.

Information being released – request seven

7. Any record of revised drafts of the review report exchanged between the reviewer and the Commission since 25 March 2026, including the dates of each exchange (I am not seeking the content of the drafts, just the metadata).

The Public Service Commissioner (the Commissioner) received a copy of the draft report at 3.13pm on 25 March 2026. With the Commissioner’s approval, Ms Meares sent this same version to two other Commission officials at 6.51pm on 1 April 2026.

Ms Meares sent an updated version (version two) of the draft report to the Commission at 8.13am on 11 May 2026. Ms Meares provided both a ‘clean’ and ‘track changes’ version.

The Commission added comments to version two and sent this back to Ms Meares at 5.03pm on 2 June 2026.

Ms Meares provided a further updated version (version three) of the draft report to the Commission at 5.15pm on 8 June 2026.

Information not released – request eight

8. Any comments provided by the Public Service Commissioner to the reviewer under paragraph 12 of the Terms of Reference, and the dates those comments were provided.

Comments from the Commissioner were provided to Ms Meares on 24 April 2026 and 29 May 2026 (in-person), and via email on 2 June 2026.

I am withholding comments made by the Commissioner to the reviewer under section 9(2)(ba)(i) of the OIA, to protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence or which any person has been or could be compelled to provide under the authority of any enactment, where the making available of the information would be likely to prejudice the supply of similar information, or information from the same source, and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied.

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the OIA.

Information being released – request nine

9. Any record indicating the date on which the Commission now expects to receive the final report.

On 26 June 2026 (after the date your request was received), the Commissioner wrote to Parliament's Governance and Administration Committee to advise we are in the “*fact-checking phase of finalising the report*” and that “*it is likely that it will be around mid-July before I am in a position to provide the final report to the Auditor-General*”.

Information does not exist – request 10

10. Any record held by the Commission of what the Public Service Commissioner told, or intended to tell, the Governance and Administration Committee on 2 December 2025 regarding the likelihood of the Commission running similar paid social media advertising in future, including any speaking notes, briefing, or post-appearance correspondence.

There is no record held by the Commission of what the Commissioner intended to tell the Governance and Administration Committee on 2 December 2025 regarding the likelihood of the Commission running similar paid social media advertising in future. I am therefore refusing that part of your request under section 18(e) of the OIA on the grounds the information requested does not exist.

The Commission holds a transcript of what the Commissioner told the Governance and Administration Committee on 2 December 2025. This is also publicly available at the link provided in the table below.

Item	Date	Document Description	Website Address
3	2 December 2025	2024/25 Annual review of the Public Service Commission Governance and Administration Committee	https://vimeo.com/showcase/10758255?video=1142210720

Information does not exist – request 11

11. Any record of the commitment referred to in replies 20500, 20506, and 17995 (2026) that the Commission will not boost, promote, or pay for social media posts relating to collective bargaining or industrial action while the review is ongoing, including when and in what terms that commitment was made.

There is no record held by the Commission recording its commitment to not boost, promote, or pay for social media posts relating to collective bargaining or industrial action while the review is ongoing, outside what is referenced in the Written Parliamentary Questions described above. I am therefore refusing this request under section 18(e) of the OIA on the grounds the information requested does not exist.

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).

Yours sincerely



Nicky Dirks

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



Kaupapa-here Pāpāho Pāpori | Social Media Policy

Version	1.1	Contact	Chief Communications Officer
Policy Owner	Chief Communications Officer	Approved	May 2022
SharePoint	Corporate Policies and Procedures	Revision Due	May 2024

Kaupapa | Purpose

The public and public servants have a legitimate interest in the Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission (the Commission) and the activities of the wider Public Service.

The primary purpose of our social media activity is to communicate about and engage on the work of the Commission and the wider Public Service to:

- Help build public understanding of what the Public Service, including the Commission, does and why
- Demonstrate our system leadership role by providing information the Public Service and the public need to know about
- Demonstrate and provide exemplars of the core values of the Public Service and our spirit of service.

Alongside the traditional media and website, the Commission engages with our audiences through its social media channels – primarily Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter (and other potential future channels that we determine beneficial to communicate through).

The Commission’s brand and reputation is important. It’s important the Public Service, the Government and the general public have trust and confidence in the Commission. This extends to our communications, content and conduct on social media. We must always maintain the highest possible standards expected of public servants and adhere to the core values and principles of the Public Service.

Hōkaitanga | Scope

This policy applies to all people working at the Commission, including permanent, seconded, contracted, and temporary staff, regardless of position or seniority.

Ngā Matapono | How we work

Ngā whakamananga, tukanga hoki | Authorisations and processes

The Commission’s social media accounts will always remain the property of the Commission. Only those people authorised by the Chief Communications Officer are permitted to post content under the name of the Commission on any of our social media accounts - or to undertake other actions such as following, liking or moderating content.

A master list of all people authorised to post will be kept and maintained by the Communications

and Engagement team. While authorised posters must attach their personal accounts to the Commission's social media accounts to post, all Commission accounts must be disconnected from the personal accounts on the departure of a staff member. This must be verified by the Chief Communications Officer and the staff member's name will be removed from the master list.

The Communications and Engagement Team will review this policy and the organisations or people we follow on a regular basis, and no less than quarterly each year.

The Communications and Engagement Team will maintain a master record of all Commission social media account logins and passwords.

Approval is required from the Chief Communications Officer, and the Te Mana Arataki member for the relevant business group, for the creation of any additional social media channels or to extend the use of existing social media channels in the Commission.

Complaints about social media posts or any related activity will be referred to the Chief Communications Officer and any relevant Deputy Commissioner. Serious complaints, including any involving questions of political neutrality or the integrity of posts or related activity will be escalated to the Commissioner.

The way our channels are managed must align with our social media transparency statement, published on our website. Our transparency statement will be reviewed at least every 12 months.

Tānga kōrero pāpāho pāpori | Social media content

Posts must be peer-reviewed by a principal communications advisor, or someone more senior if the post is deemed sensitive. The following guidelines apply:

- Where a post involves content generated by a Commission business group, it must also be approved by that business group. The relevant Deputy Commissioner is responsible for determining the level of sign-off in their group.
- All content generated and the conduct of people posting on Commission channels must be in line with the Code of Conduct for the State Services - Standards of Integrity and Conduct and our Political Neutrality Guidance.
- Posts, including shared posts, must have a business purpose and generally relate to our [role and function](#).
- Content must be impartial and politically neutral and must not promote, or be perceived to promote, any particular political party or viewpoint.
- Content must be factual. Reasonable steps must be taken to ensure it is accurate and not based on opinion. While posts might explain government policy and how it is being implemented, promoting or defending it is the role of the Minister.
- Individuals profiled or quoted on the Commission's social media must provide their consent. People's personal information must be protected and respected in line with our obligations in the [Privacy Act 2000](#).
- Where another agency's post profiling an individual is shared by the Commission, that consent is assumed to have been obtained by the agency sharing the initial post. Where an agency sends us content for a post profiling an individual, we must ensure that agency has secured consent.
- Any content that is boosted, or could be considered to be advertising, must be consistent with the Guidelines for Government Advertising.

Care must be taken with tags/hashtags used in posts. Any reference to a commercial entity or brand must be tied to a clear business purpose, i.e. referencing Spirit of Service Awards sponsors.

Te whai haere me te paingia | Following and liking

A judicious approach should be taken to following and liking social media accounts or posts as these actions are likely to be perceived as endorsements. There should be a clear business need for doing so and consideration should be given to perceptions of bias that might arise. Mitigating this in terms of following might involve actions such as following a broad range of accounts.

The posts of individuals or organisations known to produce material that is offensive or questionable shouldn't be followed or liked.

Te aroturuki tānga kōrero me te urupare ki ngā uinga mai | Moderating content and responding to queries

The Communications and Engagement team is responsible for moderating the Commission's social media accounts. Offensive or irrelevant comment, comment that could negatively impact perceptions of the Commission's political neutrality, or information that breaches someone's privacy will be moderated or removed as necessary.

Our Terms of Engagement will be used to inform decision making on moderation. This document is published on our website and linked to through our channels and sets out to the public our expectations on them when engaging with us,

In this COVID environment there is a particular need to moderate misinformation and disinformation. The Ministry of Health has provided the useful guidance for [District Health Boards](#) which should be used when considering comments of this potential nature

The Communications and Engagement Team is responsible for determining whether a response to a comment or question on a post is required. Where this involves content derived from, or relevant to a business group, the Team will first consult with the relevant Deputy Commissioner or their delegate if necessary or appropriate.

Responses to posts should occur within a 24 hour-window during weekdays, or on the Monday if they are posted on the weekend. Business groups who have been involved in the development of content for a post must anticipate and be prepared to assist the team with this engagement.

The same response timeframe will apply to private messages, all of which must be responded to.

Te whakaatu i ō mahi mā ngā ara pāpāho pāpori | Profiling your work on social media channels

Social media content is generated by the Communications and Engagement Team. Business groups are encouraged to submit ideas and suggested copy, but the Team has editorial discretion.

Commission staff wishing to profile work they are involved with at the Commission on their personal social media accounts, are encouraged to speak to the Communications and Engagement Team before posting. Our preference, where possible, is to use our Commission channels to profile our work. The team can help you to do this.

If you do post information related to your work on your personal social media account, i.e. you wish to comment about an event you attended in your capacity as a Commission employee, you must be judicious and ensure you follow the Code of Conduct and our [Political Neutrality Guidance](#).

He tikanga whakamahi mō te whakamahi pāpāho pāpori mō ngā take whaiaro | Guidance for

Public servants' personal use of social media

Social media is used every day outside of work and is part of how we all interact with family, friends, colleagues and others. This policy does not prevent that. However, keep both the Code of Conduct and our Commission principles for interaction with social media in a private capacity in mind. More information can be found in [Social Media Guidance](#) on our website.