



# Public Service Commission

Te Kawa Mataaho

30 July 2026

9(2)(a) privacy

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## Official Information Request

**Our Ref: OIA 2026-0180**

I refer to your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request received by the Public Service Commission Te Kawa Mataaho (the Commission) on 16 June 2026 for:

*“A copy of the media plan, including all draft media plans, relating to the release of the independent report into Immigration New Zealand’s Biometric Capability Upgrade, and any public comments by the Commission or Government Ministers relating to this release.*

*Copies of all communications including emails and text messages between the Public Service Commission and any Minister or ministerial office regarding the release of the independent report into Immigration New Zealand’s Biometric Capability Upgrade.*

*Copies of all emails and text messages sent or received by the Commissions media or communications teams regarding the release of the independent report into Immigration New Zealand’s Biometric Capability Upgrade.*

*Copies of all emails and text messages sent or received by the Commissioner or his office regarding the release of the independent report into Immigration New Zealand’s Biometric Capability Upgrade”.*

## Information being released – part one

Listed in the table below are copies of the MBIE communications plan received by the Commission relating to the release of the *Immigration New Zealand’s Biometric Capability Upgrade report*.

| Item | Date         | Document Description                             |                  |
|------|--------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1    | 11 June 2026 | MBIE communication plan                          | Released in part |
| 2    | 15 June 2026 | Email from office of the Minister of Immigration | Released in part |
| 3    | Attachment   | MBIE external media plan                         | Released in part |

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

- section 9(2)(a) – to protect the privacy of natural persons, including deceased people
- section 9(2)(b)(ii) – to protect information where the making available of the information would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information.

I have considered whether the public interest in releasing the information outweighs the need to withhold it. While there is a public interest in promoting transparency and accountability in government decision-making, I do not consider that interest outweighs the need to protect the commercial position of the party concerned or the privacy of individuals.

### **Information being released – part two**

Listed in the table below are communications between the Commission and Minister's or their offices within scope of your request. We have not included emails delivering the letters between the Public Service Commissioner and the Minister for Immigration.

| <b>Item</b> | <b>Date</b>  | <b>Document Description</b>                                                                                       | <b>Decision</b>  |
|-------------|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| 4           | Various      | Text message between the Commissioner and Minister of Immigration                                                 | Released in part |
| 5           | 13 June 2026 | Email from Office of Minister of Immigration                                                                      | Released in part |
| 6           | 14 June 2026 | Letter from Minister of Immigration to the Commissioner                                                           | Released in part |
| 7           | Various      | Text messages between the Commissioner and office of the Minister of the Public Service and Digitising Government | Released in part |
| 8           | 14 June 2026 | Email sent from Commissioner to office of the Minister of the Public Service and Digitising Government            | Released in part |
| 9           | 13 June 2026 | Copy of letter sent from Minister of Immigration to MBIE Chief Executive                                          | Released in part |
| 10          | 15 June 2026 | Email from office of the Minister of Immigration                                                                  | Released in part |
| 11          | 15 June 2026 | Letter from the Public Service Commissioner to the Minister of Immigration                                        | Released in full |
| 12          | 15 June 2026 | Letter from the Public Service Commissioner to the Minister of Finance and Minister for Digitising Government     | Released in full |

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

- section 9(2)(a) – to protect the privacy of natural persons, including deceased people
- section 9(2)(g)(i) – to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any public service agency or organisation in the course of their duty.

I have considered whether the public interest in releasing the information outweighs the need to withhold it. While there is a public interest in promoting transparency and accountability in government decision-making, I do not consider that interest outweighs the need to protect the free and frank exchange of views or the privacy of individuals.

### **Information being released - part three**

Listed in the table below are the media queries received by the Commission's media team within scope of part three of your request.

| <b>Item</b> | <b>Date</b>  | <b>Document Description</b>                           | <b>Decision</b>                            |
|-------------|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 13          | 16 June 2026 | Interview request – RNZ Morning Report                | Interviewed 7:05am 17 Jun 26               |
| 14          | 16 June 2026 | Interview request – RNZ Checkpoint                    | Declined due to late afternoon commitments |
| 15          | 16 June 2026 | Interview request – 1 News                            | Declined due to late afternoon commitments |
| 16          | 16 June 2026 | Interview request – NZ Herald                         | Interviewed 16 Jun 26                      |
| 17          | 16 June 2026 | Interview request – NewstalkZB                        | Interviewed 5:30pm                         |
| 18          | 16 June 2026 | Interview request – Hosking Breakfast NewstalkZB      | No interview – no longer required          |
| 19          | 17 June 2026 | Herald NOW                                            | Declined due to morning commitments        |
| 20          | 17 June 2026 | Interview request – Heather du Plessis-Allen Newstalk | Interviewed 5:05pm                         |

### Information publicly available - part four

Co-ordination of letters to Minister's, the Commissioner's media statement, the terms of reference for the Inquiry and communications with MBIE were managed through the Commissioner's office. Listed in the table below are the final version of the Commissioner's media statements and the terms of reference for the Inquiry which are publicly available on the Commission's website at the links also provided in the table below.

| Item | Date         | Document Description           | Website Address                                                                                                                                            |
|------|--------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 21   | 16 June 2026 | Commissioner's Media Statement | <a href="#">Commissioner to investigate integrity concerns linked to failed immigration technology project - Public Service Commission Te Kawa Mataaho</a> |
| 22   | 23 June 2026 | Commissioner's Media Statement | <a href="#">Michael Heron KC to investigate claims officials misled Ministers - Public Service Commission Te Kawa Mataaho.</a>                             |
| 23   | 22 June 2026 | Terms of Reference             | <a href="#">Terms of Reference - MBIE BCU Inquiry</a>                                                                                                      |

I have decided to withhold all emails sent or received by the Commissioner's office related to the drafting of these documents under section 9(2)(g)(i) of the OIA to maintain the conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions.

I have considered the public interest in disclosure and acknowledge the importance of transparency regarding the Commission's actions and decision-making. It is our view that public interest is sufficiently met by the release of the final media statement, letter and Terms of Reference for the Inquiry. These documents provide visibility of the Commission's final decisions and positions, and I do not consider the public interest in disclosure outweighs the need to protect the free and frank exchange of views that occurred during their development.

### Information being released - part four

Listed in the table below are emails received and sent by the Commissioner within scope of part four of your request.

| Item | Date         | Document Description                       | Decision         |
|------|--------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------|
| 24   | 14 June 2026 | Email from the Commissioner to Nic Blakely | Released in full |
| 25   | 14 June 2026 | Email from Nic Blakely to Commissioner     | Released in full |
| 26   | 14 June 2026 | Email from the Commissioner to Nic Blakely | Released in full |

#### **Information not released – part four**

There are additional documents covered by your request that I have decided to withhold in full under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA to protect the privacy of individuals, including that of deceased natural persons.

I have considered whether the public interest in releasing the information outweighs the need to withhold it. While there is a public interest in promoting transparency and accountability in government decision-making, I do not consider that interest outweighs the need to protect privacy of individuals.

We are currently preparing the documents outlined in our response for release and will provide these to you no later than **11 August 2026**.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact [Enquiries@publicservice.govt.nz](mailto: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](http://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 Commission's website.

Yours sincerely



Nicky Dirks

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