



7 July 2026

9(2)(a) privacy

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Official Information Request
Our Ref: OIA 2026-0183

I refer to your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request received by the Public Service Commission Te Kawa Mataaho (the Commission) on Saturday 13 June 2026 for information on the '+' included in the Commission's material on Rainbow public servants and Te Taunaki Public Service Census (the Public Service Census).

For ease of reference, we have listed each of your requests (numbered 1 – 7) and provided our responses directly underneath.

Information publicly available – Requests 1 and 2

- 1. What does the "+" in LGBTQIA+ mean in Public Service Commission material***
- 2. What does the '+' in MVPFAFF+ represent in Commission material?***

How the Commission defines LGBTQIA+ is outlined in the Glossary of the Rainbow inclusive language guide. The '+' recognises there are further identities not listed in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Intersex, Asexual or Ace. The '+' in MVPFAFF+ recognises that the list of Pasifika terms that make up MVPFAFF, is not exhaustive.

The glossary and guide referred to above are publicly available on the Commission's website at the links provided in the table below.

Item	Document Description	Website Address
1	Rainbow inclusive language guide	https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/guidance/rainbow-inclusive-language-guide
2	Glossary — Diversity and inclusion, common rainbow terms	https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/guidance/glossary/diversity-and-inclusion

Accordingly, I have refused your requests for the documents listed in the above table under section 18(d) of the OIA on the grounds the information requested is or will soon be publicly available.

Information being released – Requests 3 to 7

3. Which groups are included under “Rainbow, LGBTQIA+, MVPFAFF+ or SOGIESC” for Census and workforce reporting purposes?

As questions about sexual identity, transgender status, and intersex variation can be highly personal, agencies may not collect this information as a standard part of their workforce data and reporting. The Public Service Census is a voluntary, confidential survey of staff working in Public Service departments and departmental agencies, that allows the Commission to gather more sensitive demographic information.

For the 2025 Public Service Census, Rainbow identity was collected using the question ‘Do you identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Takatāpui, Gender diverse, Intersex, Queer, Questioning, Asexual, or as part of any other community captured under the umbrella terms Rainbow, LGBTQIA+, MVPFAFF+ or SOGIESC?’.

In addition to ‘yes’ and ‘no’ responses, the question included ‘don’t know’ and ‘prefer not to answer’ options. Respondents are included in reporting about Rainbow communities if they select ‘yes’ to that question.

Reporting from the survey relies on each respondent’s own understanding of the terms included in the question.

4. What characteristics do those groups share with lesbians, gay men and bisexual people?

The Commission recognises that rainbow is a broad umbrella term that covers a diversity of sexual orientations as well as gender identities and expressions, and sex characteristics. Rainbow communities, rather than Rainbow community, indicates that there is not a homogenous group and that there are multiple communities woven into the rainbow umbrella term.

5. Does the Commission recognise that gender identity frameworks may conflict with the rights and interests of lesbians, gay men and bisexual people?

The Commission takes our lead from the public servants who are members of these communities, and we work in partnership with relevant Employee Led Networks to help inform advice and initiatives using their experiences and perspectives. We recognise and acknowledge that there is complexity and diversity within all equity groups and varied specific challenges that face them.

6. Has the Commission considered that some LGB public servants may not consent to being grouped under broader “Rainbow”, “LGBTQIA+”, “queer”, “MVPFAFF+” or gender identity frameworks?

The Public Service Census is a voluntary survey and each question provided a non-response option (prefer not to answer), and so whether people identified as belonging within the broader grouping was entirely voluntary. That said, we acknowledge that some people and communities may prefer to be identified and/or reported separately.

7. Would the Commission consider reporting sexual orientation separately from gender identity, sex characteristics and other identity categories?

The Public Service Census questionnaire is reviewed and adapted for each survey cycle. This ensures the questionnaire remains relevant to the information needs of the government of the day, while continuing to support system-level workforce reporting.

In 2021, the questionnaire included individual questions on sexual identity, transgender status, and intersex variation. Based on our 2021 Public Service Census, we have published the following reports about the experiences of these communities at the links provided in the table below.

Item	Document Description	Website Address
3	Te Taunaki Public Service Census 2021: Sexual Identity Deep Dive	https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/DirectoryFile/Deep-Dive-Sexual-Identities.pdf
4	Te Taunaki Public Service Census 2021: Gender Deep Dive	https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/DirectoryFile/Deep-Dive-Rainbow-Gender.pdf
5	Te Taunaki Public Service Census 2021: Transgender Deep Dive	https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/DirectoryFile/Deep-Dive-Trans.pdf
6	Te Taunaki Public Service Census 2021: Intersex Deep Dive	https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/DirectoryFile/Deep-Dive-Intersex.pdf

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