



29 January 2020

[Redacted]
[Redacted]

Dear [Redacted]

Official Information Request
Our Ref: SSCOIA 2019-0268

I refer to your official information request received on 18 December 2019 where you have asked:

- *How your organisation engages with people who do not have English as a first language. Especially if there are any guidance, policies, processes or documents on how to translate? Including any project plans, technical specifications and review processes?*
- *Is SSC doing to specifically encourage Te Reo translation?*
- *Are there any future plans to include best practices around translation in NZ's public sector agencies?*

The public sector has an important role to play in supporting the revitalisation of te reo Māori in Aotearoa/New Zealand. As our population continues to grow and become more diverse, the public sector will also increasingly need to invest in communicating in a wider range of languages particularly with those New Zealanders whose first language is not English.

The State Services Commission's (SSC) role as a small central agency however means that our primary stakeholders are other government agencies. We provide few services directly to the public and have limited community engagement and related demand for multi-lingual communications. An example of where we have used multi-lingual publications is during the State Sector Act Reform public consultation: the SSC released a short form consultation document in te reo Māori which can be found at: [State Sector Act Reform - Short Form Consultation Document - Te reo Māori](#)

The Crown's Māori Language Strategy - Maihi Karauna – was released in 2019 and requires public service departments to have te reo Māori language plans in place by 2021. Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (Māori Language Commission) is leading the co ordination of the implementation of the strategy and the State Services Commission's plan is well underway. Further information about this, including the role other agencies have in leading this work can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

We're working to introduce more use of te reo Māori in our written and digital communications and publications, as well as in the daily verbal interactions within the Commission and with external stakeholders. A Māori Language Plan for the Commission is under development to support this shift and to ensure we play our part in supporting the implementation of Maihi Karauna the Crown's Māori Language Strategy. The Commission's plan, once completed, will include guidance on priorities for translation into te reo Māori, appropriate translation services and information on relevant protocols to be observed.

Currently, where we translate material into or from te reo Māori, our usual practice is to contract the services of Te Taura Whiri I Te Reo Māori (Māori Language Commission) licensed and approved translators. We also use the Departmental of Internal Affairs Translation Service for assistance with translations for te reo Māori and a range of other languages, where required.

While we don't have people employed as translators at the Commission, we do have staff fluent in a number of languages other than English able to converse or translate in those languages in some circumstances. Pending the finalisation of our Māori Language Plan, we don't have specific translation policies or processes documented, but ensure that we engage with external experts, including those referred to above, to guide us on best practice translation on a case-by-case basis.

SSC is committed to meeting the New Zealand Government [web accessibility standard](#) and the [web usability standard](#) . All new content is uploaded on the SSC website in multiple formats, including HTML, to ensure it is accessible to everyone. This supports translation services. There is work underway on transitioning relevant legacy material into this format and a broader project looking at updating our websites and other online assets to not only reflect the Public Service Reforms but also ensure that SSC's information continues to meet best practise on accessibility.

Individual agencies would be best placed to respond to your question about future plans they may have for improving translation services.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact Ministerial.Services@ssc.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) on the State Services Commission's website.

Yours sincerely



Nicky Dirks
Managing Principal – Ministerial Services
State Services Commission