

2 February 2026



s9(2)(a)

Our ref: OIA 2526-0681

Tēnā koe s9(2)(a)

Response to your Official Information Act request

I refer to your email of 15 December 2025 to the Office of Hon Mark Mitchell requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

“Under the OIA, can I please request documents relating to the feedback, as listed in WQ 51846

- On 15 July 2025, the Ministry provided feedback to the Ministry of Justice on the List of Themes from the Committee. Specifically, the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Christchurch Masjidain, social cohesion and belonging and International Decade for People of African decent.*
- On 15 October 2025, the Ministry provided feedback to the Ministry of Justice on the CERD review. Specifically, combatting racial stereotypes and situation of Māori women Pacific women and women belonging to other ethnic groups...”*

As you are aware, on 15 December 2025, the Office of Hon Mark Mitchell transferred your request in full to the Ministry for Ethnic Communities (the Ministry) under section 14 of the Act, as it is believed to be more closely connected with our functions.

Decision

There are four documents in scope of the request. Documents one and two are released to you with some out of scope information redacted.

Documents three and four are earlier versions of document sections included in the delegation pack that the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) prepared for New Zealand’s review before the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in November 2025. These contain information from agencies in draft form for review. As such, these documents are withheld in full under section 9(2)(g)(i) to maintain 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. Please refer to the document schedule below.

However, we have released as much information as possible to support your request, consistent with the purposes of the Act and have also provided a summary below of feedback the Ministry provided to MoJ on documents three and four. As MoJ is the lead agency for leading New Zealand’s delegation on CERD, you can contact MoJ if you have further questions on these documents.

As required by section 9(1) of the Act, I have considered whether the grounds for withholding information under section 9(2)(g) of the Act are outweighed by other considerations which would make it desirable, in the public interest, to make that information available. In this instance, I do not consider that to be the case.

Feedback Summary

Document three – Ministry comment on combatting racial stereotypes

The Ministry commented it has developed intercultural capability resources to help people and organisations work effectively across cultures and address bias. The Ministry also administers an annual \$4.2 million *Ethnic Communities Development Fund* to support communities to build capability, celebrate culture and participate fully in society.

To strengthen the quality of ethnic data, the Ministry released a comprehensive indicator report, offering in-depth ethnic data that complements the Ministry of Social Development's *Social Cohesion in Aotearoa New Zealand 2024* report. The Ministry also published a concordance aligned with the New Zealand Ethnicity Standard, providing public sector agencies with an approach to collect and report detailed ethnicity information about Ethnic Communities.

In addition, the Ministry published an analysis of ethnic pay gaps, highlighting disparities and their drivers, as well as ethnic evidence reports and an interactive *Ethnic Communities Census 2023 data dashboard* to help inform policy and investment decisions.

Document four – Ministry comment on the situation of Māori women, Pacific women and women belonging to other ethnic groups

The Ministry asked whether a dedicated section on Ethnic Communities should be included, noting that these communities now make up 23% of New Zealand's population. The Ministry advised that gender-based violence content should also reflect the experiences of ethnic women, who often face additional barriers to reporting due to language, immigration status and cultural stigma.

The Ministry highlighted the steady growth in employment and business participation among ethnic women, while noting they may have lower access to culturally safe health services, particularly in reproductive and maternal health. As in document three, the Ministry referenced its wider work on intercultural capability resources, detailed ethnic data products, pay gap analysis and investment through the Ethnic Communities Development Fund.

Under section 28 of the OIA, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of my response relating to this request. The relevant details can be found on their website at: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Please note, due to the public interest in our work, the Ministry may publish responses to requests for official information on our website, shortly after the response has been sent. If you have any queries about this, please feel free to contact our Ministerial Services team:

Ministerial@ethniccommunities.govt.nz.

Ngā mihi



Edward Firth

Director of Ministerial Services

Document Schedule

| Document Number | Document | Decision |
|-----------------|--|--|
| 1. | Theme Other Issues – MEC response | Release with out of scope information redacted. |
| 2. | Theme Royal Commission of Inquiry into Christchurch Masjidain | Release in full. |
| 3. | MEC comment on Situation of Māori women Pacific women and women belonging to other ethnic groups | Withheld in full under section 9(2)(g)(i). Feedback summary provided. |
| 4. | J. Combatting Racial stereotypes MEC Comment | Withheld in full under section 9(2)(g)(i). Feedback summary provided. |

Proactively released by the Ministry for Ethnic Communities

Theme: Other issues

CERD/C/NZL/CO/21-22

| # | Issue | Responsible Agencies | Existing information | Additional/updated information required |
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| Out of scope | | | | |
| 3 | International Decade for People of African decent | MEC MBIE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Zealand recognises and celebrates the important contributions of people of many different descents. While nothing specific is planned for the International Decade for people of African descent there are a range of opportunities and initiatives that benefit and acknowledge people of African descent in New Zealand. Examples include the Government Social Cohesion Framework, the upgrade of the Office of Ethnic Communities into a Ministry, the Ethnic Communities Development Fund and <u>Former Refugee, Recent Migrants and Ethnic Communities Employment Action Plan.</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide any update on steps taken in relation to the International Decade for people of African descent. <p>N/A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an update on the Ethnic Communities Development Fund and <i>Former Refugee, Recent Migrants and Ethnic Communities Employment Action Plan.</i> |

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| | | (CERD/C/NZL/23-24 at 56) | <p>MEC Administers the Ethnic Communities Development Fund (ECDF). The ECDF has \$4.2 million annually available to Ethnic Communities to build their own capability, grow a sense of belonging, and express their cultural identity. During the 2024/25 financial year, the funding was distributed across over 408 projects. Funded initiatives include local cultural festivals, programmes to help people build skills in areas such as employment, leadership, language, and supporting different cohorts such as business communities, elders, youth, and women.</p> <p>Since 2022, the ECDF has provided funding to 104 projects that went towards benefitting African communities. <i>(Please note that some of the projects were part of joint projects and, therefore, some of the funding was provided by other agencies.)</i></p> <p>The Former Refugee, Recent Migrants and Ethnic Communities Employment Action Plan is not specific to people of African descent. This Action Plan has been superseded by the Government's overarching strategy and six population-based employment action plan, including this one.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any other relevant information or activities celebrating ethnic communities. <p>New Zealand recognises and celebrates the important contributions of people of many different descents. Ethnic communities (New Zealanders with ethnic descent from Asian, African, middle eastern, Latin American and Continental European) make up 1 in four people in New Zealand now. The Ministry for Ethnic Communities developed in December 2024 for the first time in New Zealand's history, Ethnic Evidence, a base line report which brings together in one place how ethnic communities are doing in New Zealand. The Ministry organises range of conferences, symposiums at events including on interfaith matters. For example, the <i>Ethnic Advantage</i> conference brings together ethnic communities to discuss important social and cultural issues, and celebrate the superdiversity of Aotearoa New Zealand. <i>Ethnic Xchange symposium</i> looks at how the public and private sectors can work in partnership to unlock the potential of ethnic businesses for the benefit of New Zealand. In addition, the Minister for Ethnic Communities hosts Parliamentary events every year, such as Lunar New Year, Eid-al-Fitr and Diwali.</p> |
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Out of scope

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Out of scope

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| 6 | Social cohesion and belonging | Stats MBIE MEC MPP TPK MSD | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide updated data and information on New Zealand’s ethnic and religious diversity and experiences of racial and religious discrimination. <p>Please see the latest data and information on this page: https://www.ethniccommunities.govt.nz/resources/corporate-publications/bim-january-2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific measures envisaged to assess the adequacy of current structures and processes to respond appropriately to NZ’s changing demographics. • Specific measures taken to ensure that the diversity of the population is appropriately reflected in planning, delivery and allocation of services and funding. <p>The Ministry is developing a guidance for government agencies on design and delivery of inclusive policies and services, and the collection and publication of data about Ethnic Communities. The purpose of this guidance is to help public service agencies to understand and factor into policy and operations the needs of Ethnic Communities in New Zealand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated information on the implementation and monitoring of the social cohesion framework. • Specific measures implemented and outcomes achieved to improve social cohesion. • Specific measures to facilitate opportunities for new migrants, particularly former refugees, to learn about and make connections with other communities. |
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Theme: Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain

CERD/C/NZL/CO/21-22

| # | Issue | Responsible Agencies | Existing information | Additional/updated information required |
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| 1 | Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain (Note some aspects of this theme are captured in other areas – eg: hate crime and NAPAR) | Justice MEC Police MSD DPMC DIA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Zealand has undertaken a significant work programme to address the 44 recommendations made by the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Developing a strategic framework, measurement framework and and package of tools and resources to support New Zealanders’ collective social cohesion efforts, ○ Ongoing review of counter-terrorism legislation, resulting in a number of amendments designed to ensure public sector agencies are better placed to prevent future terrorist attacks, ○ Developing a national strategy for countering terrorism and violent extremism, ○ Assume an international leadership role in countering violent extremism online via the establishment of the Christchurch Call to Eliminate Violent Extremist and Terrorist Content Online, ○ Training Police staff to recognise, record and respond to hate-motivated events, ○ Establishing a Ministry for Ethnic Communities to improve outcomes for ethnic communities, ○ Firearm reforms. <p>Social cohesion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In New Zealand, we define a socially cohesive society as one in which all individuals have a sense of belonging, inclusion, participation, recognition and legitimacy. • In general, data suggests that New Zealand has high levels of connectedness and belonging, trust, participation and wellbeing. However, these outcomes are not equally shared by all groups. • As just mentioned, the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Christchurch Terrorist Attack made recommendations to improve social cohesion in New Zealand, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ to develop a social cohesion strategic framework and monitoring and evaluation regime in collaboration with communities, civil society, local government and the private sector ○ to create opportunities for regular public conversations for all New Zealanders to share knowledge and improve their understanding of social cohesion and the value that cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity can contribute to a well-functioning society. • In response to these recommendations and based on input from communities, New Zealand developed a social cohesion strategic framework (Te Korowai Whetū) and other tools and resources to support New Zealanders’ collective social cohesion efforts. • Events such as the Covid-19 pandemic, have highlighted again the importance of fostering a socially cohesive society to create resilient communities that are able to thrive. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please provide a detailed update on the response to recommendations from the Royal Commission. • Please provide a detailed update on Te Korowai Whetu as well as any other tools and resources aimed at improving social cohesion. Where possible provide data or evaluative material to show impact. • Please provide a detailed update on New Zealand’s strategy for countering terrorism and violent extremism, what has been achieved and how including data and evaluative evidence where available. • Please provide a detailed update on steps taken (legislative and policy) to address digital violent extremism. • Please provide a detailed update on legislative amendments in response to the Royal Commission. • Please provide a detailed update on all amendments to firearms legislation, policies etc since 2019. Please include information and data on their implementation where relevant. • Please provide an update on the coronial inquiry. <p>• Please provide an update on the <i>Strategy 2022–2025: A pathway to an Aotearoa where ethnic communities feel at home</i>, what actions have been undertaken and what has been achieved as well as next steps.</p> <p>The Ministry’s Strategy 2022-2025 provides a pathway to an Aotearoa New Zealand where ethnic communities feel at home. It is the Ministry’s operational strategy and is based on consultation with over 600 people from ethnic communities.</p> <p>The Strategy guides the Ministry’s work programme across four interconnected priorities - each with a corresponding outcome. Successful delivery of the actions requires collective effort from a range of stakeholders, including other government agencies, community organisations, service providers, local government and the private sector.</p> <p>It is not possible to list all the actions undertaken by the Ministry in the last three years, but highlights are set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Releasing Ethnic Evidence base line report which consolidates data across 50 indicators and 120 measures, spotlighting the contributions, challenges, and lived realities of our over 1 million ethnic community members. • Advising agencies and Minister on policy issues that impact on ethnic communities, nominating ethnic people to public sector board and committees- and partnering with others such as with the Education Review Office on a report that sheds light on racism in New Zealand schools for the first time |

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| | <p>Countering violent extremism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countering the threat of terrorism and violent extremism is a complex, long-term challenge. • New Zealand’s strategy for countering terrorism and violent extremism, released in 2022, aims to prevent and counter all forms of terrorism and violent extremism together as a nation. It centres around collaboration between multiple government organisations, law enforcement agencies, civil society, academia and wider communities. This collaborative approach reflects the realities of modern violent extremism and terrorism which is experienced both online and offline. • New Zealand has also assumed an international leadership role in countering violent extremism online via establishing the Christchurch Call to Eliminate Violent Extremist and Terrorist Content Online. The Christchurch Call is a multistakeholder community of over 130 governments, online service providers, and civil society organisations acting together to eliminate violent terrorism and extremism online. • Other actions to counter terrorism and violent extremism include establishing three entities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the <i>Digital Violent Extremism Team</i> to respond to and prevent the spread of objectionable material that promotes or encourages violent extremism online 2. the <i>Countering and Preventing Online Violent Extremism Group</i> to increase the connections and cooperation between key stakeholders currently operating in the prevention of online terrorist and violent extremist content across New Zealand, and 3. <i>New Zealand’s National Centre of Research Excellence for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (He Whenua Taurikura)</i>. The Research Centre is tasked with producing and coordinating independent New Zealand-specific research on the causes of, and measures to prevent, violent extremism and terrorism. <p>Counter-terrorism legislation review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alongside recent reforms, New Zealand is also progressing a broader review of legislation in the counter-terrorism regime. • When reviewing our counter-terrorism settings, careful consideration is given to the impact of any changes on people’s human rights, including their freedom of expression, privacy, and other civil liberties. At the same time, consideration is also given to the | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting communities through emergencies and conflict, such during natural disasters (such as after the North Island weather events), geo-political events (such as Ukraine-Russia and Israel-Palestine conflicts) and local events (such as the LynnMall attack). • Supporting communities to build resilience to foreign interference • Engaging with a range of stakeholders such as ethnic business leaders and entrepreneurs, ethnic business councils, private sector organisations and government agencies to build consensus on the critical economic priorities for Ethnic Communities. • Publishing resources and guidance for public sector agencies on translation and interpreting services. This contributed to lifting the public sector’s intercultural capability skills and to meeting the diverse language needs of New Zealand’s population • Providing funding to support ethnic communities empowerment • Celebrating communities events at Parliament • Co-producing information videos on health, and emergency preparedness, translated in 24 languages • Convening conferences and forums to promote unity, inclusion and social cohesion among Ethnic and Faith-based communities <p>Please provide detailed information on other actions, programmes, etc that MEC has taken to improve outcomes for ethnic communities. Please included any data and monitoring information.</p> <p>In partnership with Statistics New Zealand, the Office of Ethnic Communities published an Ethnic Communities Data Dashboard in 2018. This dashboard is currently being updated with Census 2023 data and will be available in the next couple of weeks.</p> <p>In December 2024, the Ministry published its inaugural Ethnic Evidence report, spotlighting the contributions challenges and lived realities of Ethnic Communities in New Zealand. This report is designed to help the New Zealand public sector consider Ethnic Communities for government investment, policy development and service delivery intervention. The indicators in this report draw on over 120 measures and are organised by three outcomes which are based on the Ministry for Ethnic Communities.</p> <p>The Ministry is currently building on this report and exploring where more analysis and data is required to understand the specific needs of or opportunities for Ethnic Communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please provide information on the resourcing, implementation and monitoring of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain. |
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right to life and security, the duty to protect New Zealanders from harm, and delivering on New Zealand's international obligations in contributing to global security

- Since the release of the Royal Commission report, New Zealand has made several changes and progressed work addressing specific areas of counter-terrorism law to better enable public sector agencies to prevent future terrorist attacks. This includes:
 - Passing the Counter-Terrorism Legislation Act in 2021, which criminalised planning and preparation of terrorist acts.
 - Passing the Counter-Terrorism Acts (Designations and Control Orders) Amendment Act in 2023, which strengthened and addressed gaps in the regimes that provide for the designation of individuals and entities as terrorists and that place limits on their activities.
 - Passing the Security Information in Proceedings Act in 2022, which creates a consistent and coherent framework for using security information in court.
 - Completing a review of the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Financing of Terrorism Act in 2022.
 - Completing an independent review of the Intelligence and Security Act in 2023. The Act provides intelligence and security agencies with adequate and appropriate powers and duties and ensures that their functions are performed in accordance with New Zealand law and human rights obligations.
 - Commencing work on a bill to accede to the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime.

Weapons ban and broader firearms reform

- Following the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain, the Arms Act 1983 was amended to remove most semi-automatic firearms, pump-action shotguns and large capacity magazines from circulation and use by the general population in New Zealand. New Zealand instituted a buy-back of prohibited firearms and parts from owners within a six-month amnesty period, resulting in the collection, destruction, or modification of more than 60,000 firearms.
- Regulations enacted in 2019 allowed for a buy-back of newly prohibited firearms and parts from owners within a six-month amnesty period. Police recorded 61,332 newly prohibited firearms had been collected and destroyed or modified by approved gunsmiths.
- Prohibited firearms, pump-action shotguns, magazines and parts can still be purchased and possessed by firearms licence holders; however, an additional 'endorsement' is required, for example for pest control purposes. As at 31 January 2024, 327 firearms licence holders had an exemption for this purpose.

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- The Arms Act was amended again in 2020 to establish a registry, including additional record-keeping requirements for dealers, and greater oversight of shooting clubs and shooting ranges.

Coronial inquiry

- The Coronial Inquiry into the Christchurch Masjidain Attacks is the largest Coronial Investigation New Zealand has seen.
- In New Zealand, a Coronial Inquiry is a collaborative process to establish the truth of what occurred, with a view to making findings and recommendations to prevent deaths in similar circumstances in the future. It cannot impose penalties or award compensation.
- The first phase if the inquiry was completed in December 2023 and the Coroner's findings are expected this year. The inquest will resume in May.
- There are more than 140 interested parties in the Coronial Inquiry. Many of these interested parties are the immediate family of each of the 51 people who lost their lives in the terrorist attack.
- A range of additional measures have been taken to ensure the families are fully supported and enabled to participate. This includes Legal Aid-funded lawyers, translated content, cultural advice, court victim advisors, and taking a trauma-informed approach throughout the coronial process

Ministry for Ethnic Communities

- The Ministry for Ethnic Communities was established in 2021 to improve outcomes for ethnic communities through policy and advice, monitoring and data, and partnering and engagement.
- In August 2022, the Ministry published its *Strategy 2022–2025: A pathway to an Aotearoa where ethnic communities feel at home*. The strategy is shaped by four priorities that guide and underpin the Ministry's work programme:
 - Promoting the value of diversity and improving the inclusion of ethnic communities in society,
 - Ensuring government services are provided equitably and are accessible for ethnic communities,
 - Improving economic outcomes for ethnic communities, including addressing barriers to employment (a concern raised in UPR consultations), and
 - Connecting and empowering ethnic community groups.

(UPR speaking material)

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