

15 December 2023

s9(2)(a)

Mālō 'e Ie lei

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RESPONSE TO AN OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST (RE: DOIA027-2023/24)

On 24 October 2023, you contacted the Ministry for Pacific Peoples (the Ministry) requesting information relating to the Ministry's Pacific Aotearoa Lalanga Fou report. We contacted you to clarify this request and on 26 October 2023 you agreed that it could be treated as an Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request. On 17 November 2023, a letter was sent to you advising that we had to extend your request due to the need to search through a large quantity of information.

I have outlined your specific requests and my responses below.

- 1. I am interested in the research that led to the conceptualization of "Pacific Aotearoa," "belonging" and similar messages the Ministry has promoted since the 2018 publication of the Pacific Aotearoa Lalanga Fou report, and the Vision Summit.*
- 2. I am interested in comments submitted by participants in the 2018 Lalanga Fou project, any reporting the Ministry conducted that provides background/ justification/ rationale for the shift to belonging as opposed to being manuhiri, and if Te Puni Kokiri or any other Māori were consulted (perhaps the Minister of Māori Affairs?), and what advice/ comments they may have provided on the conceptualisation of "Pacific Aotearoa."*

The development of the Pacific Aotearoa Lalanga Fou report was the culmination of the work done by the Ministry for Pacific Peoples with Pacific communities across the country in 2017-2018, to shift our focus from government-led to Pacific-led solutions. Generally, the concept of 'Pacific Aotearoa' derives from multiple insights:

- New Zealand is a Pacific nation, and this is reflected in our partnerships in the Pacific region.
- Two thirds (66%) of our Pacific people are now New Zealand-born.
- We heard how an increasing number of Pacific peoples, especially Pacific youth, have shared whakapapa with tangata whenua.

Unfortunately, given the time since the report was published, staff changes and adjustments to our information management systems we were unable to track down any further raw data specifically related to the concept of 'Pacific Aotearoa'. Further to this, insights from participants were collected under a strict research framework, and the consent process does not allow for further dissemination of raw data.

I must therefore refuse this part of your request under section 18(e) of the OIA as the information cannot be found despite our best efforts to locate it. Additionally, if we were able to locate it, we would have to withhold it under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA to protect the privacy of natural persons, due to the consent process considerations outlined above.

We have also conducted a search for consultations undertaken with specific Māori agencies/groups in relation to Pacific Aotearoa and none were identified. We must therefore refuse this part of your request under section 18(e) of the OIA as the information does not exist.

Next steps

We understand and acknowledge the importance of supporting research into Pacific experiences of living in, and being part, of Aotearoa New Zealand. If suitable and appropriate, we are happy to connect you with our new Data and Insights directorate who now lead all Ministry research into Pacific experiences and perspectives. There may be some value in the discussion, as we work closely with Pacific communities across the country and can share some insights (albeit informal) on your research question of a Pacific Aotearoa.

In line with standard OIA practice, the Ministry proactively publishes some of its responses to OIA requests. As such, this letter may be published on the Ministry for Pacific Peoples' website. Your personal details will be removed, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you or your organisation.

Should you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact the Ministry at: uia_requests@mpp.govt.nz.

If you are dissatisfied with this response, you have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Mālō 'aupito

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ali Ajmal', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ali Ajmal
**Deputy Secretary,
Office of the Secretary**