

5 July 2023

[REDACTED]

REF: OIA-12853

Dear [REDACTED]

Request made under the Official Information Act 1982

Thank you for your email of 7 June 2023 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) relating to the He Tohu Huarahi Māori bilingual traffic sign programme. I will answer each of your questions in turn.

1. Who initiated the Brief for this program of work and under who's authority/direction.

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency started work to consider bilingual traffic signs in November 2020, following the Minister of Transport making a commitment to have bilingual traffic signs introduced across the country. In January 2021, the Minister of Transport requested, in a Letter of Expectations, that Waka Kotahi progress with work on bilingual traffic signs.

- 2. What cost benefit analysis was carried out and by whom.**
- 3. Who approved the Cost Benefit justification.**
- 4. Forward copy of Cost Benefit document.**

No cost-benefit analysis work has been undertaken. I am therefore refusing your requests for this information under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information requested does not exist, or despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

5. List of issues/concerns this program is addressing.

Despite te reo Māori being the indigenous language of Aotearoa New Zealand, there are a very small number of traffic signs that combine both te reo Māori and English text. Māori communities have been asking for more te reo Māori on traffic signs, which provide an opportunity for te reo Māori to be seen in our communities, to support the learning and revitalisation of the language.

The He Tohu Huarahi Bilingual Traffic Signs programme forms parts of the Waka Kotahi contribution to Maihi Karauna, the Crown's strategy for te reo Māori revitalisation 2019 – 2023. Maihi Karauna is aimed at ensuring there are everyday opportunities for New Zealanders to engage with and use te reo Māori.

6. When was the Project Brief delivered and who wrote the brief.

7. Forward copy of Program Brief.

Advice on options for implementing bilingual traffic signs across Aotearoa New Zealand was provided to the Minister of Transport on 8 September 2021. This advice was provided by Te Manatū Waka Ministry of Transport and Waka Kotahi.

The advice is provided to you in Attachment 1 – OC210592 Options for implementing bilingual signs across Aotearoa. Certain information has been withheld from the document under section 9(2)(b)(ii) of the Act, 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.

With respect to the information that has been withheld, I do not consider there are any other factors which would render it desirable, in the public interest, to make the information available.

8. What Risk Assessment was undertaken and by whom.

9. Forward Risk Assessment.

10. Forward Issues Register.

A risk assessment has not been undertaken. Therefore, I am refusing your request for this information under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information requested does not exist, or despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

However, I note that as part of developing the package of signs put out for public consultation, Waka Kotahi commissioned a research note which looked into the safety aspects of bilingual signage. It found that there is no evidence that they lead to an increase in the number of people dying or being seriously injured. Instead, there is evidence that drivers initially adjust their behaviour by paying closer attention to new signs, then quickly become familiar with them.

The research note can be found at:

www.nzta.govt.nz/about-us/consultations/archive/he-tohu-huarahi-maori-bilingual-traffic-signs-consultation/consultation-materials-english/.

11. What Budget Allocation has been approved for this program and who approved the budget.

12. Where was the allocation of this funding allocated in the existing NZ TA allocated tax payers funding.

13. Forward Budget for this program.

14. Advise a breakdown of all funding allocation spent/committed, including but not limited to:

- a. Internal NZ TA labour costs
- b. Consultant fees
- c. Name of consultant companies or individuals
- d. Any Intellectual Property costs or licensing fees incurred to date
- e. Any ongoing/annual Intellectual Property costs or licensing fees

There is no budget allocation for the He Tohu Huarahi programme, as expenditure on this programme has been funded through existing budgets within Waka Kotahi.

From November 2020 to 23 May 2023, \$1,040,269 has been spent on the He Tohu Huarahi Māori traffic signs programme. A breakdown of this expenditure is provided below:

- Safety design and rule and policy advice - \$746,492
- Safety related research - \$153,000
- Cultural and engagement specialist advisors - \$103,250
- Translation services - \$31,552
- Event-based costs for the unveiling of the Kura School signs in Rotorua and Napier - \$5,975.

In relation to your questions around intellectual property or licencing costs, I can confirm that as the design of the signs has been undertaken in-house, no costs have been, or will be, incurred.

Under section 28 of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision to withhold and partially refuse some information in your request. The contact details for the Ombudsman can be located at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

In line with Waka Kotahi policy, this response will soon be published on our website, with personal information removed.

If you would like to discuss this reply with Waka Kotahi, please contact Ministerial Services by email to official.correspondence@nzta.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K Mayes', with a large loop at the end of the name.

Katie Mayes

National Manager Policy and System Planning