

9 November 2023

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REF: OIA-13751

Dear ██████████

### Request made under the Official Information Act 1982

Thank you for your email of 2 October 2023 requesting the following information in relation to a recent *One News* report about the introduction of digital driver licences under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). I will respond to each part of your request in turn as follows:

*Does that mean that the digital driver licence will be similar to the virtual bank cards issued by financial institutions (such as ANZ, Westpac, BNZ etc.), where the virtual card can be added to an Apple Wallet (if the operating system is iOS) from the app, and it would function similar to the Proof of COVID-19 vaccination status virtual card (also known as COVID-19 Vaccine Pass) developed by the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment?*

*If so, would it function in the same way, as the digital driver licences in the United States developed by Apple Inc? (<https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT212940>).*

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency is currently in the discovery phase for this work. We are exploring what is being done in other countries and how this would work best in a New Zealand setting. Waka Kotahi has not made any technical decisions on how this will be delivered – except that the New Zealand digital driver licence will be compliant with the ISO international standard ISO18013-5 (which is the international standard for how driver licences are implemented on mobile devices).

*Is NZTA aiming to use current driver licence numbers as the unique identifiers for a unified database? Has NZTA considered using Inland Revenue Department (IRD) numbers as the primary database for its digital licence unique identifier. [...] Will NZTA take into account of collaborating with IRD for a wider concept of Digital Identity?*

The Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) is the government organisation responsible for identity management and identity management standards. Waka Kotahi holds regular and ongoing discussions with DIA about its Digital Identity Programme, which is considering options for the future of digital identity and security in New Zealand, including a digital driver licence. Waka Kotahi has also not made any technical decisions on how the digital driver licence will be delivered.

*Could you please release all internal documents that are related to Liz Maguire's statements about digital driver licence? Such as advice given; research conducted; internal memos; project timeline, notes etc.*

On 24 October 2023 you refined this part of your request to information on what progress has been made towards a digital driver licence in the last 12 months.

During the last 12 months Waka Kotahi has compiled an initial assessment of legislative changes to enable a digital driver licence in New Zealand. At present, New Zealand legislation only allows for physical driver licences and paper temporary licences. Waka Kotahi envisages the digital driver licence as an electronic version of a New Zealand driver licence, with the ability to retrieve driver licence information already held in the Driver Licence Register and displaying it in digital form.

While no decisions have yet been made by the Government, physical driver licences are likely to still be issued by Waka Kotahi and customers would be able to have both a physical driver licence and, if they wish, a digital driver licence. As the list of amendments is currently under active consideration by Waka Kotahi, this information is withheld under section 9(2)(g)(i) of the Act as it is necessary to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between Waka Kotahi employees in the course of their duty.

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.

We have also met with industry groups about technology options for the digital driver licence. A PowerPoint presentation used during one of these meetings in May 2023, that explains our journey and roadmap options, is enclosed:

- Attachment 1 – Presentation re DDL roadmap options.

*In the same news article, it stated that "The app will be tested by NZTA staff and is due to launch midway through next year." [...] Will NZTA consider public beta version? if so, would I be able to sign up as a volunteer to try out the first patch of release?*

Waka Kotahi intends to carry out a Public Beta of the Waka Kotahi mobile app, and members of the public will be welcome to submit their interest to become volunteers when announced. We suggest that you follow our media releases webpage at <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/media-releases/> for details.

I will also respond to each part of your further email of 31 October 2023 in turn as follows:

*Staff Selection for Internal Testing:*

*I understand that NZTA is in the process of gathering expressions of interest from approximately 500 internal staff members for the initial testing phase. Once this stage is complete, could NZTA kindly disclose the job titles, age groups (segmented, not specific ages) and tertiary level of education (based on NZQA level groups, e.g., Level 7-8, etc.) of these staff members? [...]*

Beta testing is a common practice to find and resolve any technical issues before general release, ensuring the App is working as expected. Waka Kotahi is also not collecting personal information about staff members who are participating in the Beta testing. Waka Kotahi is building the App in line with New Zealand Government accessibility guidelines, as well as the option of using the App in Te Reo Māori.

*Choice of Reference Models:*

*During our phone conversation, Belinda mentioned that NZTA is monitoring the digital driver's licence implementation experience in Queensland, Australia. Could you elaborate on why Queensland was chosen as the reference point, as opposed to other Australian states like New South Wales, which have already implemented similar initiatives? Additionally, it would be insightful to understand why NZTA is not considering the experiences of US states that have already rolled out digital driver's licences developed by Apple Inc (such as the one in Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, and Maryland).*

Waka Kotahi has been discussing the digital driver licence with other international jurisdictions who already have a digital driver licence available to the public, or the public is engaged in a pilot or trial. These include the Department of Transport and Main Roads (Queensland, Australia), the Department of Transport and Planning (Victoria, Australia), Service NSW (New South Wales, Australia) and Department of Driver Services (Georgia, United States).

*Impact on Social Equity:*

*In New Zealand, the commonly accepted forms of identification are passports, NZ driver licences, and KiwiAccess (formerly known as 18 Plus Card [...]). Given that there are no immediate plans to digitise the KiwiAccess card, has NZTA considered the potential for creating a societal disparity? Specifically, the issue here is that individuals with a driver's licence would have the option for a digital ID, whereas those without a licence would not. [...] I am keen to understand NZTA's thoughts on this matter.*

As previously mentioned, the DIA is the responsible government organisation for identity management and identity management standards. We suggest that you contact the DIA about general identity matters in the first instance.

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

Under section 28 of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision to withhold part of this information. The contact details for the Ombudsman can be located at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz).

If you would like to discuss this reply with Waka Kotahi, please contact us by email to [official.correspondence@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:official.correspondence@nzta.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely



**Liz Maguire**  
Chief Digital Officer