

18 December 2023

[REDACTED]

REF: OIA-14270

Dear [REDACTED]

Request made under the Official Information Act 1982

Thank you for your email of 7 December 2023 requesting the following information on bilingual signage under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

How much money has been spent on this already? Will this be shared?

A total of \$1,162,667 has been spent on the He Tohu Huarahi Māori bilingual traffic signs programme.

NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi undertook a public consultation process on a proposed package of 94 bilingual signs for 6 weeks from 22 May to 30 June 2023. We received 44,219 submissions in total. Unfortunately this process is now closed to submissions but you can find the consultation information here: <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/about-us/consultations/archive/he-tohu-huarahi-maori-bilingual-traffic-signs-consultation/consultation-materials-english/>

You may be interested to know that we also consulted on a number of 'Kura School' signs at the end of 2021. These signs were approved for use in April 2022 and are already making their way on the transport network. You can read more about these changes here: <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/about-us/consultations/archive/kura-school-traffic-signs-consultation/>

We have proposed that bilingual traffic signs are introduced onto the transport network when new signs are needed (e.g., when a new road is built) or when existing signs need to be replaced (eg due to age, vandalism or other damage). Costs are minimised under this approach as these signs are going to be replaced or introduced to the transport network over time (for some signs it may be up to 30 years before they need to be replaced). Our FAQ section in the above link has some more information on this.

We follow best design practice to ensure the safety of bilingual signs by clearly differentiating between the two languages. NZTA research shows bilingual signs have not led to an increase in deaths or serious injuries in other countries where this has been measured. You can read more about our research on bilingual traffic signage here:

<https://www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/resources/research/research-notes/005/005-bilingual-traffic-signage.pdf>

The He Tohu Huarahi Bilingual Traffic Signs programme forms part of the NZTA 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.

More information about Maihi Karauna is available at: <https://www.tpk.govt.nz/en/a-matou-whakaarotau/te-ao-maori/maihi-karauna>

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 black ink, appearing to be 'Amy Moorhead', with a small period at the end.

Amy Moorhead

National Manager, Policy