

8 November 2022

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

REF: OIA-11203

Dear [REDACTED]

### Request made under the Official Information Act 1982

Thank you for your email of 13 October 2022 requesting the information about plate number under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). I will address each of your questions in turn as follows

#### **1) Can you confirm, it is authentic?**

Yes, I confirm that Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency issues letters of this nature.

**2) Usually, a number replaces the number of letters missing (exceptions are 0 or 1). Sometimes it can replace a noise (8 = ate, etc). DIKT8R would mean that eight letters are missing between T and R did not know a word that fits, but I did not see that it fits "Dictator" either. By using the noise for 8, it would be DIKTATER. That is still far away from Dictator. DIKT8R as "Dictator" did not appear in any Google Search as a possible Interpretation as well. Only a Domain without further Information in the TLD .com is used, and a User with this name is on YouTube. Please describe, what is the Source of the information, and this is commonly interpreted this way.**

Waka Kotahi was first made aware of the DIKT8R registration plate on 23 May 2022 after a complaint was made by a member of public. Waka Kotahi subsequently reviewed the plate sequence. It was then decided that the plate sequence can be easily read and interpreted as *dictator*. The word "*dictator*" infers discrimination/ offence against, or inciting hatred of a person or section of the community. It was then determined to likely cause offence to the general public and revoked from circulation.

**3) Please provide information on how much costs were involved for NZTA to follow up with these complaints directly (Complaint) and indirectly (Press Request, OIA Requests, etc.) based on an internal used hourly rate for Office Work in your Organisation.**

Responding to complaints, providing media statements and responding to requests under the Act are part of Waka Kotahi core services. Any expenses associated with such functions are not recorded in an hourly basis. Therefore, the exact time taken to complete these functions and their costs are not held as requested. We are refusing this part of your request under section 18(g)(i) of the Act that the information is not held by Waka Kotahi and I have no grounds for believing that the information is held by another organisation.

**4) Did NZTA maintain a list of Plate numbers, that are not allowed? If yes, please provide a copy of such a List.**

Waka Kotahi maintains a register of plates that have been reviewed regarding decisions to approve or reject them. If complaints are specific to personalised plates, then Waka Kotahi maintains a register of complaints received and whether plate sequences were allowed to remain in circulation.

Unlike general registration plate numbers, a personalised plate is more identifiable to members of public, friends and family members. As such, information pertaining to this register is withheld under section 9(2)(a) to maintain the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.

**5) Are only NTZA offer personalised plates, or did Third Party Providers are allowed to print and register them as well?**

**6) If yes, Provide a list of such Providers.**

Waka Kotahi contracts KiwiPlates to market and sell the rights to personalised plates. However, KiwiPlates and Waka Kotahi do not manufacture the physical plates; this is instead done by our contracted plate manufacturer (LicenSys). Once personalised plates are manufactured, they are then registered to the appropriate vehicles by LicenSys.

**7) Did such Providers that offer personalised Plates automatically receive updates of such a List?**

KiwiPlates follows a protocol provided by Waka Kotahi to decide if a plate is deemed offensive or confusing. If KiwiPlates is in any doubt about a plate sequence, it would refer the combination to Waka Kotahi and we would then advise KiwiPlates about the decision. If the plate is deemed offensive or confusing, KiwiPlates will remove the plate from the database of available combinations.

Waka Kotahi advises KiwiPlates about any revoked plates as we offer customers a replacement plate.

**8) What is the definition of offensive Words, especially considering other languages (e.G. TROTTEL in german), cultural backgrounds and Social Media Appreciated (e.G. SEEGS).**

I have included Appendix 1 that describes the definition of offensive plates.

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).

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 us by email to [official.correspondence@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:official.correspondence@nzta.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sue Hardiman', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Sue Hardiman**

Senior Manager, Vehicle and Driver Licensing

## **Appendix 1**

### **1. Offensive Plates**

The criteria applied generally fits within six broad categories – sexual, racial, religious, safety, violence, and derogatory. In addition to this the Transport Agency reviews plate combinations and any associated caption to reduce the risk of offensive plates being manufactured and issued.

The criterion applied currently is that personalised plate legends/messages must not in any way imply a message or meaning that relates to:

1. violence, discrimination or bias based on race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation/connotations, or against any individual.
2. any activities or the promotion of substances which are prohibited by law.
3. disturbing the public peace or the maintenance of law and order.
4. any offensive, abusive or derogatory message or meaning negative or derogatory with respect to the program, e.g. alcohol, speed etc.
5. public or well-known figures, including members of the government and other dignitaries.