

15 August 2025

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

By email to: [REDACTED]

Kia ora [REDACTED]

OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST 2025/36

On Tuesday, 22 July 2025 you made a request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA) for the following information:

- 1) *Please provide copies of all correspondence including but not limited to emails, letters, emails, text messages, Whatsapp, Signal, Microsoft Teams, Zoom sent or received by any Electoral Commission staff or representatives regarding the Tamaki Makaurau 2023 Election Process.*
- 2) *Please provide copies of all correspondence reports emails letters text messages Whatsapp teams and zoom (internally/externally) of the electoral commission in regard to polling booths for the Tamaki Makaurau 2023 election process.*
- 3) *Please provide copies of all correspondence including but not limited to emails, letters, emails, text messages, Whatsapp, Signal, Microsoft Teams, Zoom sent or received by any Electoral Commission staff or representatives specifically including any requests and responses regarding the polling booth at Manurewa Marae.*
- 4) *Please also provide copies of all correspondence including but not limited to emails, letters, emails, text messages, Whatsapp, Signal, Microsoft Teams, Zoom sent or received between Electoral Commission staff or representatives as per the Electoral Commission's recommendations for polling booth positioning for the upcoming Tamaki Makaurau By-Election on 6 September 2025.*
- 5) *Please also include information on how early voting booth locations are selected and the rationale behind those decisions.*
- 6) *Additionally, please disclose any questions, requests, or communications from the Minister's Office or other departments concerning polling booth placement or other Ministers, or MP's, or external parties concerning polling booth placements.*
- 7) *Please provide the Electoral Commission processes or procedures used to identify and appoint staff for early voting booths for the upcoming 6 September 2025 By-Election in Tamaki Makaurau and the 2026 General election.*
- 8) *Please also provide details of the training programmes provided to staff appointed to the early voting booths and advise whether any vetting of staff's political preferences is undertaken prior to selection.*

After further correspondence and a meeting between you, me, and a representative from the OIA team between 27 July and 30 July, clarification was sought and agreed upon regarding the scope and

intent of the original questions. As a result of these discussions, certain questions were revised to better reflect the clarified understanding and to ensure they accurately addressed the matters you seek answers to. The following questions represent the outcome of that process.

- 1) *Information on the criteria used to select voting places in the Tamaki Makaurau electorate, the rationale for selecting Manurewa Marae, any changes made to the final list of voting places, and copies of correspondence of party feedback that resulted in voting place locations being removed for the 2023 General Election?*

Copies of the M40-Elect Plan are enclosed for all 15 electorates within the Tamaki-Makaurau electorate which sets out the plan for delivering voting service in each electorate area to meet the needs of the community.

Some contact details, such as phone numbers, some email addresses, and names, have been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA which relates to the privacy of natural persons. In each case where redactions have been made under section 9(2)(a), consideration has been given to, and I am satisfied that the reasons for withholding of the information are not outweighed by other considerations which render it desirable in the public interest to make that information available.

Parties were consulted on the draft list of voting places for the 2023 General Election. A copy of the email dated 30 June 2023 is attached. No feedback received resulted in voting place locations being removed.

- 2) *Information on the criteria used to select voting places in the Tamaki Makaurau electorate, the Electoral Commissions reasoning on why Manurewa Marae was not included in the proposed list of voting places, any changes made to the final list of voting places, and copies of correspondence of party feedback that resulted in voting place locations being removed for the Tāmaki Makaurau by-election?*

Information on the criteria used to select voting places was included in the emails sent to parties. Copies of correspondence sent to party secretaries on 25 and 30 July seeking feedback on draft voting places and copies of the feedback from other parties are included in the attached memo on final decisions regarding two venues not to be used and why Manurewa marae was not used.

Some contact details, such as phone numbers, some email addresses, and names, have been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA which relates to the privacy of natural persons. Some details are also withheld under section 6(a) of the Act where they may compromise security arrangements at elections. In each case where redactions have been made under section 9(2)(a), consideration has been given to, and I am satisfied that the reasons for withholding of the information are not outweighed by other considerations which render it desirable in the public interest to make that information available.

- 3) *Additionally, please disclose any questions, requests, or communications from the Minister's Office or other departments concerning polling booth placement or other Ministers, or MP's, or external parties concerning polling booth placements.*

There has been no communication from the Minister's offices, or other departments or other Ministers or MPs concerning polling booth placement for the by-election. We have had some enquiries about having a voting place for voters attending the Koroneihana celebrations being held at Tūrangawaewae Marae in Ngāruawāhia (attached). Information provided by parties regarding polling booth placement is addressed in question 2 above.

Some contact details, such as phone numbers, some email addresses, and names, have been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA which relates to the privacy of natural persons. In each case where redactions have been made under section 9(2)(a), consideration has been given to, and I am satisfied that the reasons for withholding of the information are not outweighed by other considerations which render it desirable in the public interest to make that information available.

- 4) *Please provide the Electoral Commission processes or procedures used to identify and appoint staff for early voting booths for the upcoming 6 September 2025 By-Election in Tamaki Makaurau and the 2026 General election.*

Procedures for identifying and appointing voting place staff are set out in the Operations Chapter attached. We also contact people who have previously worked for the Electoral Commission at previous elections and who have agreed to be contacted about future elections.

- 5) *Please also provide details of the training programmes provided to staff appointed to the early voting booths and advise whether any vetting of staff's political preferences is undertaken prior to selection.*

Training for advance voting staff includes e-learning, face to face training and instruction manuals that they are required to read and follow. Copies of the Issuing Officer, Voter Assistant and Voting Place Manager Procedures Manuals for the by-election are attached.

Some contact details, such as phone numbers, some email addresses, and names, have been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA which relates to the privacy of natural persons. Some details are also withheld under section 6(a) of the Act where they may compromise security arrangements at elections. In each case where redactions have been made under section 9(2)(a), consideration has been given to, and I am satisfied that the reasons for withholding of the information are not outweighed by other considerations which render it desirable in the public interest to make that information available.

We ask all applicants who register their interest to work for the Commission if they are involved in furthering the interest of any candidate, political party or political issues and whether there are any other matters that they wish to bring to our attention that may affect their suitability for employment with the Electoral Commission. We also ask referees the following questions on applicants when doing reference checks:

- Are you aware if the candidate has any political or other affiliations that could cause a conflict of interest for the Electoral Commission?
- Are they publicly associated with the interests of any candidate or political party or with any political issue?

In the interests of transparency, we release responses to Official Information Act requests every 3 months. We will publish this response with your personal details redacted.

You have the right under section 28(3) of the Act to make a complaint to the Ombudsman if you are not satisfied with the response to your request. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Martin Rodgers
Director, Voting Services