



5 June 2026

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 7 May 2026, with your further request regarding the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry)'s use of Twitter.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on each part of your request set out below. Some items are grouped together for clarity.

We have considered your request to reconsider parts (c) and (d) of our previous response.

1. the Ministry to search specifically for:

- a. Any emails, messages, or written communications in which the Manager of Media and Social Media, or any other staff member, discussed or communicated the decision to deprioritise Twitter posting from April 2021*

We have undertaken an email search and not been able to identify any emails, messages or written communications of this kind. We confirm our decision to refuse this request under section 18(e) for written communications. The practice change was because of conversations within the team, and therefore written communication was not necessary. The recollection of the conversation was that the channel was a lower priority due to a smaller audience, so we determined to stop regular posting on Twitter. As noted earlier, we have retained our account as a useful option for communication during emergencies.

- b. Any platform analytics, audience reports, or engagement data that was reviewed at or around the time of that decision*
- c. Any social media strategy documents, even working drafts, from 2020–2022 that reference Twitter's performance or the decision to reduce posting*

We have undertaken a search of documents and not been able to identify any records of this kind that have been retained from that period. We typically work with audience data which is held on the platforms of social media companies – we are unable to access historic data from that period from the Twitter/X platform.

We have located two mentions - In MSD Social Media Strategy 2020-2021, and in the MSD Social Media Strategy for 2022-2023. In both cases you'll see they discuss the only "analytic" we have listed, which is the number of followers on the account:

- ***"Twitter: a lower priority channel, audience static on 4800 followers; often negative reaction to MSD content".***

We confirm the Ministry does not hold any further information on engagement other than the fact there is often negative reactions to Ministry content.

I note that not all information listed in the MSD Social Media Strategies are in scope of your request, however for completeness, I attach the following for you:

- **Appendix 1** - MSD Social Media Strategy 2020-21
- **Appendix 2** - MSD Social Media Strategy 2022-23

Any further analytics and engagement information is held by Twitter/X and not the Ministry. As Twitter/X are not subject to the Act, we can't transfer that part of your request to them, so this part of your request is refused under section 18(g) of the Act as the information you had requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is either held by or closely connected to the functions of another department, Minister of the Crown or organisation.

2. *Part (e) was refused on the basis that "the decision was made before X was created when the platform was still Twitter." We ask the Ministry to release whatever audience, follower, or engagement data it holds for its Twitter/X account for the period 2019 to 2023, and any comparable Facebook data for the same period.*

Under section 16(1)(e) of the Act, I provide extracts from the MSD Social Media Strategy 2023-24 that address this request. This is attached as **Appendix Three** to this letter. You can find the comparative years for 2020-21 and 2022-23 in **Appendix 1** and **2**. Please note, that the Ministry does not hold a media strategy for 2019-20, so that part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as this document does not exist.

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with my decision on your request, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

pp.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anna Graham', written over the 'pp.' text.

Anna Graham

General Manager

Ministerial and Executive Services

Appendix Three

Excerpt from MSD Social Media Strategy 2023-2024

Facebook: This channel continues to be our priority, as it was our most responsive audience, and is widely used by our clients.

Reach

2022 - 2023 | 1,375,000 organic + 805,000 paid = 2,155,000

2021 - 2022 | 2,376,000 organic + 234,000 paid = 2,605,000

2020 - 2021 Organic reach - 2,865,000 (<25,000 paid)

2019 - 2020 Organic reach - 842,000 (<10,000 paid)

Followers grew from circa 4,000 in June of 2019 to over 18,000 in June of 2020, over 25,000 in June of 2021, 32,000 in June of 2022 and 37,500 in June of 2023.

Twitter: a lower priority channel, audience at 4,800 followers in June 2022 and 5,400 in June 2023. Used for Civil Defence comms during natural disasters.

MSD Social Media Strategy 2022 / 2023

We are building trust and confidence in MSD by engaging with our audiences where they are – on social media.

We post content they will find timely, useful and relevant, help them with their questions, listen to their feedback, and show the ways in which MSD works in their communities

	What's been achieved in 2021 - 2022?	Where do we want to be in a year's time?	What do we have to change to get there?
Summary	We continued to be a critical communication tool for COVID during the year, a place where we could quickly update clients and the public on the rapid changes in services and entitlements. We joined the Ministry drive to help with employment: publishing weekly recruitment, training and expo content. Due to the ever-increasing numbers of clients contacting us via social, the difficult step of scaling back social client service was taken, limiting both message and comment interactions.	Increased reach and audience growth of our main channels. Content we are posting is relevant and interesting to our audiences, with maximisation of reach. We understand our audiences and what they are interested in. CLAs are regularly producing high quality content in the Your Success and Good to Meet You content streams. We have increased production of in-house video content. Style across all platforms is consistent in look and feel and in quality of videos and photos.	Provide in-person and on-line training to the CLAs to further professionalise the quality of content, to make it more engaging and compelling. Also, work with Jerome to provide actionable feedback as standard practice. Update creation of content in line with Facebook May 2022 analytics report in curation of content. Analyse LinkedIn page trends and develop content plan in response to findings. TBA 1 Dec Boost posts and run ads promoting our Facebook page frequently. \$100 a week approx.
Audience and Channels	Facebook: This channel continues to be our priority, as it was our most responsive audience, and is widely used by our clients. 2021 - 2022 Organic reach – 2,924,000 (<45,000 paid) 2020 - 2021 Organic reach – 2,865,000 (<25,000 paid) 2019 - 2020 Organic reach – 842,000 (<10,000 paid) Followers grew from circa 4,000 in June of 2019 to over 18,000 in June of 2020, over 25,000 in June of 2021 and 32,000 in June of 2022. LinkedIn: Between July 2021 and June 2022 followers increased from 32,000 to 41,000 with reach averaging 100,000 p/m. Twitter: a lower priority channel, audience static on 4,800 followers; often negative reaction to MSD content.	Facebook: Increased FB reach and engagement. Followers at 40k or higher. LinkedIn: Followers at 50K or higher. More people who want to work at MSD or are employers have been attracted to follow the page.	Facebook: Boost Facebook posts more frequently, with small amounts for Entitlements content and larger amounts for Your Success and Good to Meet You content. \$100 a week approx. Run ads to attract followers on a regular basis. (Try two ads, budget \$100, report back results) LinkedIn: Flesh out Work with more diverse business units than currently, to produce in-depth content which is interesting to more specialised audiences who follow us (IT for example). Build MSD employer brand with series of posts talking to staff about their jobs – wide range of specialist jobs across MSD, not just case managers. Further info – see updated Good to Meet You guidelines and LinkedIn content strategy.
Content	Content became more diluted, with less CLA content published while the amount of training / education and employment related content dramatically increased. In 2022, posting frequency of three of the five most popular content types decreased significantly (Entitlements, Your Success and Good to Meet You). Nevertheless, Entitlements Explained was by far the most successful type of content published, with 14 EE posts reaching over 30k organically (compared to 6 in 2020). Good to Meet You and Your Success pillars, which depend almost exclusively on CLA involvement / production received far less focus, with other (less popular) content being produced, submitted and published.	We're publishing content which our audiences like best: Entitlements (Facebook), Your Success (Facebook and LinkedIn) and Good to Meet You (Facebook and LinkedIn) as well as promotion of Employment Expos / Job Fairs etc (from diverse regions)... Content which our Facebook audience find less interesting is posted less frequently: Important Days / Weeks, Working Together, Training and Education, Language Weeks and employment. Production quality of CLAs video / photo submissions has increased. More in-house (Social Media team) video content is being produced. Descriptive transcripts are written for all videos we produce and published on the MSD website [starting from 1 November 2022]	Implement takeaways from the Facebook analytics May 2022 report. Continue to monitor post performance for any new trends (Employment Expos / Job Fairs etc...). Done Liaise closely with the CLAs to assist them in producing more Your Success and Good to Meet You content. Manage any issues affecting production volumes. Organise training workshop (tentative February 2023) Update CLA handbook - Alex Produce a LinkedIn content trends document. Update LinkedIn content strategy and put it into action. Date of completion: End of year Finalise descriptive transcript process with Digital Team (self-assisted process is ideal)

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			Continue to promote descriptive transcripts to the CLAs and support them in producing them alongside the videos they make.
			Work together with Alex produce and shoot more content at NO for LinkedIn and (less so) Facebook.
Brand	Completed work on the new social look and feel, ready for implementation.	All content and platforms are adhering to new look and feel. Wallpaper changed frequently.	Work on making all content adhere to the new look and feel. Adapt new look and feel as necessary to make sure it's as effective as possible. Change wallpapers once per week.
Social customer service	Facebook comments: Responded to most comments (over 90%). Facebook private messages: 2021 - 2022 received correspondence from 4,604 Facebook users (some with multiple messages in the conversation). A reduction in monthly volumes (Nov to Dec 2022 average 393 messages p/m / May to July 2022 average 207 messages p/m).	Comments responded to where it's appropriate / necessary. We continue to provide personal and caring approach to assisting those writing to us in private messages. Few private messages are left with only an automatic response. The response library is constantly being updated to include responses to new types of queries.	No changes required.
Providing advice on social media	Implemented and updated Social Media Policy. Implemented New Page Creation Policy. Implemented yearly internal audits for MSD related social pages. Provided guidance to a variety of MSD staff.	Social Media Policy is up to date. Review is conducted for the year at the start of December. We are providing advice on all social media matters to the Ministry. All MSD related social pages are reminded yearly of the need to audit their pages. (Next due for review xxx)	Make sure we're across the latest developments in the All of Government social media space with inputs from Public Service Commission, Public Service social media group, industry best practice and legislation changes. Monitor all Ministry pages quarterly to be aware of content and interactions with followers. (Due to be done)
Business continuity			Creating templates for new look and feel, without use of InDesign and Photoshop, for distribution to admins. Keep deskfile updated with processes. Admins updated on Facebook (date: 25 Sept 2022). LinkedIn & Twitter passwords up to date.

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Summary

Audience and Channels

Content

Brand

What's been achieved in the year to June 2020?	
	We showed the human face of MSD. We did this through stories about our staff, and by a friendly and approachable tone and voice in our posts. Facebook grew to become a critical communication tool over the Covid period, a place where we could quickly update clients and the public on the rapid changes in services and entitlements. We offered caring, responsive customer services in FB comment responses, helping with queries and information. We showed how MSD works in the community, through client success stories and MSD's community support
	Facebook: this channel was the priority for 19/20, as it was our most responsive audience, and widely used by our clients. Our content reached 2.259 m people over 2019/2020 (1.06m organic; 1.3m paid) vs 372,000 in 2018/19 Followers grew from 2400 to 20,000 over 2019/2020 Engaged audience – significantly increased private messages, actively interact with our posts LinkedIn: this channel was largely dormant, but still had followers of 24,000 by end of 19/20 and slowly growing; Twitter: a lower priority channel, audience static on 4800 followers; often negative reaction to MSD content
	Created content that the audience is interested in and which showcases MSD's work, with Good to Meet You; Your Success and information on entitlements Developed reliable stream of content, including video, from CLAs and National Office
	Improved consistency in look and feel to posts, but visual identity fairly basic.

Where do we want to get to in a year's time?
Further strengthen the appeal and reach of our social media channels in order to directly engage with our audiences where they are, on issues important to them and to us. This includes clients, employers, job seekers, staff, the wider public, community partners and other stakeholders.
Facebook: Continue to grow FB reach and engagement Increase followers to 40k LinkedIn: Grow audience significantly, with a particular focus on employers
Deepen the range of content that is directly useful and relevant to the audience – eg user guides, information for job seekers and employers Increased use of animation and graphics Widen range of content – more Strategy and Insights (including animations and graphics), and video content from MCP Lift the quality of video content
Cohesive, attractive and engaging look and feel to our visual content across all three platforms. We want to be approachable and warm.

What do we have to change to get there?
Lift and further professionalise the quality of content, to make it more engaging and compelling. Content on employment should be a particular focus – targeting both job seekers and employers. Broaden the range of content, to show a wider picture of the ways in which MSD is working in the community. Broaden the audience, to develop employers as an audience.
Facebook: See content strategy LinkedIn: Work with employment comms leads to develop content of relevance to employers Post selected MSD jobs on LinkedIn to grow audience – work with HR Build MSD employer brand with series of posts talking to staff about their jobs – wide range of specialist jobs across MSD, not just case managers
Put a case for increased resourcing: Seek an additional designer - skills in animation and graphics who would be available part time for social media content; they may develop client-related content for Work and Income website which could then be used on social media. Seek a senior social media and content advisor – storyteller and content developer, including making video. They could develop content relating to MCP and employment, as well as working with CLAs to lift the quality of their video content.
Commission design templates and guidance - underway

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Social customer service

Responded to 2500 private messages March-May
Average post-Lockdown volumes more than 10x previous
year - around 11 private messages per day by Oct 2020

Providing advice on social media

Provided advice on a number of proposals for new social
media channels

BAU

Privacy advice has constrained effective social client service, or to
further develop what we do provide.

All MSD social media channels have access to clear policies
and guidance and annually review their channels. Social media
team seen as a source of expert advice.

BAU

*Note: Gloria, currently part-time on social client
service, finishes at the end of November*

Finalise new social media policy and advice and publish on
Doogle.
Ensure all MSD social media channels are aware of what they
need to do.
Implement processes for annual review of channels.

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