

27 SEP 2013

James Dann
fyi-request-1120-6f0f260e@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear James

Re: Request under the Official Information Act 1982

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request received on 13 September 2013. You requested the following:

"information on any content guidelines around the use of CERA social media accounts, specifically Twitter and Facebook. Is CERA required to act with the political neutrality that is expected of other government departments?"

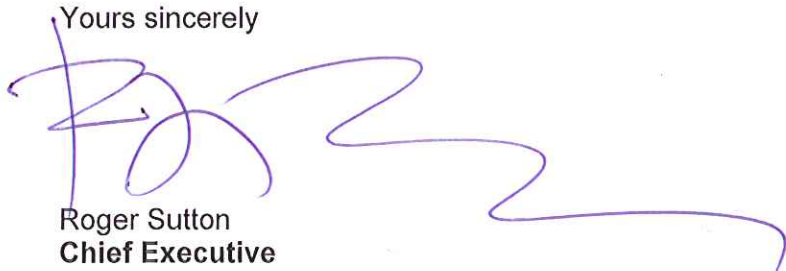
The policy for official social media accounts at the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA), which encompasses the Christchurch Central Development Unit (CCDU), is to use appropriate social media channels to deliver all CERA/CCDU information to as many people as possible while adhering to the State Services Commission (SSC) rules. This is done either by posting CERA/CCDU news and information under the CERA/CCDU banners, or by linking to other sites that are carrying information specific to CERA or CCDU. This also involves linking to the Beehive site and relates to speeches and announcements made in direct relation to CERA/CCDU work programmes. Standard practice at CERA is to tweet relevant information using CERA's own banner, and not to directly emphasise any political person or organisation.

Regarding your second question, CERA is required to act with the political neutrality expected of other government departments. CERA as an organisation takes its role in providing politically neutral information about the Christchurch recovery very seriously. CERA remains focused on delivering information about its own work programmes and the other relevant information about Christchurch's rebuild and recovery.

I acknowledge that CERA made a mistake in this regard on 10 September 2013, when it posted four direct re-tweets from John Key's Twitter account. When this error was highlighted by the No Right Turn blog, it was immediately addressed by removing the re-tweets, and notifying Minister Brownlee's staff as a courtesy. On 27 June 2013 a John Key tweet in regard to the cost sharing announcement between the Crown and the Christchurch City Council was also re-tweeted, and subsequently removed once the error realised.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'R' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Roger Sutton
Chief Executive

2011-04-15