

20 July 2021

Terry Thomas

Dear Terry

16 JUNE 2021: OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

In your email received 16 June 2021 you requested the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):


I would like all communications, briefings, meeting notes (formal and informal ie those in staff notebooks or disposable Post it-style note sheets), minutes and text messages from and to you and/or your staff, including board members, regarding the proposed film They Are Us sent, received or written in the time period up till 11 June 2021.

Please find all information in relation to your request at **Appendix 1**.

When there are earlier draft versions of documents, we have only provided the final version of that document. If a document has not been finalised and only exists in draft form, we have provided the draft version.

Information has been redacted where the documents or correspondence contain information outside the scope of the request or one of the withholding grounds under the OIA applies:

- Section 9(2)(a): to protect the privacy of natural persons;
- Section 9(2)(b)(ii): to protect information where the making available of the information would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information;
- Section 9(2)(ba)(i): to protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence, where the making available of the information would be likely to prejudice the supply of similar information, or information from the same source, and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied; and
- Section 9(2)(g)(i): to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any department or organisation in the course of their duty.



The following documents have been withheld in full:

- *Presentation* – attached to email sent from Stewart Till to Annabelle Sheehan on 8 May 2019. Withheld under 9(2)(b)(ii) and s9(2)(ba)(i) of the OIA.
- *They Are Us: Draft Script* received 4 March 2020. Withheld under 9(2)(b)(ii) and s9(2)(ba)(i) of the OIA.
- *They Are Us: Draft Script* received 9 June 2021. Withheld under 9(2)(b)(ii) and s9(2)(ba)(i) of the OIA.

The New Zealand Film Commission (NZFC) has not provided any assessment of, or feedback on, either of the two draft screenplays it has received from the *They Are Us* producing team. Whilst there has been engagement with the producing team on the project, *They Are Us* has been developed entirely independently of NZFC development funding structures. The NZFC has not received any applications for development funding, production funding or the New Zealand Government's screen incentives scheme, the New Zealand Screen Production Grant in relation to *They Are Us*.

The NZFC initially advised the Ministry for Culture and Heritage and Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment – as the two Ministries to which the NZFC reports directly, that NZFC staff first engaged with the *They are Us* producing team when the team requested a meeting with the NZFC's former CEO Annabelle Sheehan in March 2020.

Following a further review of our files, we have since determined that the NZFC had initial engagement with the producers of *They Are Us* in May 2019. This correspondence is included in **Appendix 1**. Neither of the NZFC staff involved in that correspondence and meeting - specifically Annabelle Sheehan and her Executive Assistant - continue to work for the NZFC, so they had not been involved in the NZFC's provision of information in respect of the organisation's engagement with *They Are Us*.

Please note that we will be publishing this letter (with your personal information removed) and **Appendix 1** on the NZFC website.

You have the right, by way of complaint to the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act, to seek an investigation and review of our response.

Yours sincerely



Tayla Hancock
Policy Advisor
New Zealand Film Commission

