



17 February 2023

J Schofield  
fyi-request-21370-8b7cb08c@requests.fyi.org.nz

Ref: OIA-2022/23-0413

Dear J Schofield

**Official Information Act request for communications with Twitter's SRT-GET and SIP-PES**

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) of 9 December 2022.

You have requested:

1. *"...all documents held that constitute communications between the Prime Minister, other Ministers, or other NZ Government officials, agencies or agents and; Twitter's Strategic Response Team - Global Escalation Team (SRT-GET), and Twitter's Site Integrity Policy, Policy Escalation Support (SIP-PES).*
2. *Please consider SRT-GET and SIP-PES to include any known/potential members of that team, and any high ranked officials/employees at Twitter. Specifically but not exclusively this includes Jack Dorsey, Vijaya Gadde, Yoel Roth, Parag Agrawal, as identified as SIP-PES members by Ms Bari Weiss.*
3. *I seek any communications relating to requests by NZ govt persons or entities and Twitter that seek to suppress or alter the dissemination of any information tweeted by any person known or thought to be either or both a New Zealand citizen/permanent resident and/or located within New Zealand (incl any overseas territory/overseas NZ govt controlled location).*
4. *I also request all documents held that may constitute similar discussions or communications that may be of any international public interest.*
5. *I also request all documents held that constitute any discussion of suppression of any information whatsoever, between the same NZ Govt persons and twitter-related persons.*
6. *I also request all documents held that constitute NZ-govt internal policies or discussions relating to the suppression or algorithmic alteration of the dissemination of information by Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.*

*I limit the period covered by this request to the period between 1 January 2019 and today's date (9 December 2022).*

Please reference the #TwitterFiles by journalists Matt Tiabbi and Bari Weiss, brought to us by Twitter's new owner, notable gigachad Elon Musk.

Specifically;

"12. The group that decided whether to limit the reach of certain users was the Strategic Response Team - Global Escalation Team, or SRT-GET. It often handled up to 200 "cases" a day.

13. But there existed a level beyond official ticketing, beyond the rank-and-file moderators following the company's policy on paper. That is the "Site Integrity Policy, Policy Escalation Support," known as "SIP-PES.

14. This secret group included Head of Legal, Policy, and Trust (Vijaya Gadde), the Global Head of Trust & Safety (Yoel Roth), subsequent CEOs Jack Dorsey and Parag Agrawal, and others".

These tweets are available from this link – [www.twitter.com/bariweiss/status/1601007575633305600?s=20&t=WcJ7Tf3x9l-nPdSwEOGK6g](https://www.twitter.com/bariweiss/status/1601007575633305600?s=20&t=WcJ7Tf3x9l-nPdSwEOGK6g)"

On 22 December 2022, we wrote to you and advised that your request, as it is currently framed, has not been specified with due particularity per section 12(2) of the OIA. We further advised that we consider it reasonably necessary for your request to be clarified in order for us to respond appropriately and requested that you provide clarity and particularity on the six points of your request.

On 27 December 2022, you responded and noted that you are confident that your request meets the "due particularity" test. While the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) does not consider that your request has been specified with due particularity per section 12(2) of the OIA, we will endeavour to provide a response to your request.

### **Parts One and Two**

As you are aware, elements of these parts of your request were transferred to the Prime Minister's Office for response on 13 January 2023.

DPMC has interpreted these parts of your request to refer to all communications between 1 January 2019 and 9 December 2022 between DPMC and "Twitter's Strategic Response Team - Global Escalation Team (SRT-GET), and Twitter's Site Integrity Policy, Policy Escalation Support (SIP-PES) [including] any known/potential members of that team, and any high ranked officials/employees at Twitter. Specifically but not exclusively this includes Jack Dorsey, Vijaya Gadde, Yoel Roth, Parag Agrawal, as identified as SIP-PES members by Ms Bari Weiss" (Twitter).

I can advise that DPMC is not aware of the teams you have referred to. It therefore follows that DPMC has not had any correspondence with those specific teams. As such, your request for communications between DPMC and Twitter's Strategic Response Team – Global Escalation Team (SRT-GET), and Twitter's Site Integrity Policy, Policy Escalation Support (SIP-PES) is refused under section 18(e), as the document alleged to contain the requested information does not exist. As we are unaware of these teams, we are also unable to identify "any known/potential members of that team" and therefore your request for

communications between DPMC and members of that team is refused under section 18(e), as the document alleged to contain the requested information does not exist.

You also requested communications between DPMC and “any high ranked officials/employees at Twitter”. DPMC’s view is that “high ranked officials/employees at Twitter” has not been expressed with due particularity. That being said, DPMC has endeavoured to provide you with information we consider to be within the scope of your request.

I can confirm that DPMC has had communications with the individuals listed in your request between 1 January 2019 and 9 December 2022.

Please find attached the documents within the scope of your request. Information that is not within the scope of your request has been marked out of scope. Some information has been withheld under section 9(2)(g)(ii) of the OIA to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through protection from improper pressure or harassment.

Further information has been withheld under section 9(2)(ba)(i) to protect information subject to an obligation of confidence, as the making available of that information will likely prejudice the supply of similar information, and section 9(2)(j) to enable a public service agency or organisation holding the information to carry on negotiations without prejudice.

In making my decision, I have taken the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Act into account.

In addition to this information, you may find of interest two Prime Ministerial Overseas Travel reports. I have listed them in the table below for ease of reference:

Date	Document Title	Website Address
11 Sept 2021	Cabinet Decision CAB-19-SUB-0284: Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern (May 2019)	<a href="http://www.dPMC.govt.nz/publications/cabinet-decision-cab-19-sub-0284-report-overseas-travel-rt-hon-jacinda-ardern-may-2019">www.dPMC.govt.nz/publications/cabinet-decision-cab-19-sub-0284-report-overseas-travel-rt-hon-jacinda-ardern-may-2019</a>
21 Sept 2022	Proactive Release – Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern and Hon Damien O’Connor (CAB-22-SUB-0321/CAB-22-MIN-0321)	<a href="http://www.dPMC.govt.nz/publications/proactive-release-report-overseas-travel-rt-hon-jacinda-ardern-and-hon-damien-oconnor">www.dPMC.govt.nz/publications/proactive-release-report-overseas-travel-rt-hon-jacinda-ardern-and-hon-damien-oconnor</a>

We further note that you are also requesting communications between “*other Ministers, or other NZ Government officials, agencies or agents*” and Twitter.

As you have not stated with due particularity which agencies or ministers you are referring to, DPMC was not able to transfer that part of your request to the relevant agencies/offices. If you would like to know whether a specific minister has corresponded with Twitter, you may wish to email them directly instead. The contact details of ministers are publicly available on the Beehive website, at: [www.beehive.govt.nz/ministers](http://www.beehive.govt.nz/ministers).

**Part Three**

You requested: “*any communications relating to requests by NZ govt persons or entities and Twitter that seek to suppress or alter the dissemination of any information tweeted by any*”

*person known or thought to be either or both a New Zealand citizen/permanent resident and/or located within New Zealand (incl any overseas territory/overseas NZ govt controlled location)."*

For clarity, we have interpreted this part of your request to refer to any communications between DPMC and Twitter that seek to apply content moderation to people in New Zealand or New Zealand citizens or permanent residents. I can advise that DPMC is not responsible for issues of online content moderation in New Zealand, and DPMC has not had any communications within the scope of this part of your request. I further advise that DPMC does not hold communications made by another government agency.

The Department of Internal Affairs' (DIA) Digital Safety Group is responsible for issues of online harms in New Zealand. As you are aware, this part of your request was transferred to DIA for response on 20 January 2023.

If you would like to make a request for communications between other government agencies and Twitter, you may wish to email them directly instead. The contact details of each government organisation are publicly available on its website.

#### **Part Four**

You requested: *"all documents held that may constitute similar discussions or communications that may be of any international public interest"*.

DPMC has interpreted this part of your request to refer to any discussions or communications that relate to the first three parts of your request that may be of any international public interest. I can confirm that the information provided in response to Parts One and Two applies also to this part of your request.

#### **Part Five**

You requested: *"all documents held that constitute any discussion of suppression of any information whatsoever, between the same NZ Govt persons and twitter-related persons."*

As noted above, DPMC is not responsible for issues of online content moderation in New Zealand. DIA's Digital Safety Group is responsible for issues of online harms. As you are aware, this part of your request was transferred to DIA for response on 20 January 2023.

As advised above, DPMC does not hold communications made by another government agency. If you would like to make a request for communications between another government agency or minister and Twitter, you may wish to email them directly instead.

#### **Part Six**

You requested *"all documents held that constitute NZ-govt internal policies or discussions relating to the suppression or algorithmic alteration of the dissemination of information by Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram."*

As noted above, DPMC is not responsible for issues of online content moderation in New Zealand. DIA's Digital Safety Group is responsible for issues of online harms. As you are aware, this part of your request was transferred to DIA for response on 20 January 2023.

We note that you might be interested in the work of the Christchurch Call Community; DPMC operates as Secretariat to this Community. The Christchurch Call's multistakeholder community, which includes Twitter and Meta, works to eliminate terrorism and violent extremism content (TVEC) online. You can find more information about the Christchurch Call, its multistakeholder community, and its work to eliminate TVEC online at [www.christchurchcall.com](http://www.christchurchcall.com). In particular, you may find of interest the four Christchurch Call Leaders' Summits that have taken place between May 2019 and September 2022. You can find this information at <https://www.christchurchcall.com/about/leaders-summits/>.

The Christchurch Call Community also works to *research and understand* the role algorithms play in the dissemination of TVEC online. If you would like further information regarding work relevant to Christchurch Call, you may wish to visit the Christchurch Call website, at: [www.christchurchcall.com/media-and-resources/reports-and-publications/](http://www.christchurchcall.com/media-and-resources/reports-and-publications/).

You can find out more about the recently announced Christchurch Call Initiative on Algorithmic Outcomes on the Christchurch Call website and in a proactively released Cabinet paper on the Initiative: [www.dPMC.govt.nz/publications/proactive-release-christchurch-call-research-partnership](http://www.dPMC.govt.nz/publications/proactive-release-christchurch-call-research-partnership). You can also find proactively released information relating to the Christchurch Call at [www.dPMC.govt.nz/publications](http://www.dPMC.govt.nz/publications). Further information about Countering Violent Extremism Online is also publicly available on DIA's website, at: [www.dia.govt.nz/Countering-Violent-Extremism](http://www.dia.govt.nz/Countering-Violent-Extremism).

As you declined, in our view, to clarify your request with due particularity, we have endeavoured to interpret and respond to your request in accordance with the OIA. I trust the information provided is of assistance. You have the right to ask the Office of the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the OIA.

This response may be published on DPMC's website during our regular publication cycle. Typically, information is released monthly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

Yours sincerely



Anneliese Parkin  
**Deputy Chief Executive, Policy**