



Te Pā Whakamaruaru
New Zealand Security
Intelligence Service

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18 September 2023

Erika Whittome

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Tēnā koe Erika

Official information request

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request of 1 August 2023, partially transferred to the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (NZSIS) from the Department of Internal Affairs on 24 August 2023. The part of your request transferred to the NZSIS asked:

"Please share all Posts and tweet(s) from 1 January 2021 to March 2023 that are requested by the ... NZSIS ... to be categorized as "Misleading Information", "breach of community standards", "Disputed Claim" and/or "Misinformation" to Twitter and Facebook.

For the avoidance of doubt this request covers actual files in whatever format, ALL correspondence, diary notes, aide memoires or any documentation including written and electronic correspondence including emails, as well as phone, txt, and other messaging apps including but not limited to Signal and Whatsapp..."

It may be helpful if I begin by outlining our role. The NZSIS is New Zealand's domestic security agency and lead organisation for human intelligence (HUMINT). We collect and analyse intelligence in line with the Government's National Security Intelligence Priorities (NSIPs). Our scope within the NSIPs is typically focused on protecting New Zealand from terrorism, violent extremism, espionage and foreign interference. Further information about our role and focus can be found online at: <https://www.nzsis.govt.nz/>.

Your request asked for all posts and tweets the NZSIS requested be categorised as "misleading information", "breach of community standards, "disputed claim" and/or "misinformation". The NZSIS has made no such requests; activity of this sort is not part of our remit. Accordingly, I am formally refusing your request under section 18(e) of the OIA, as the information requested does not exist.

The NZSIS's concern in relation to disinformation is only when there is a national security nexus, for example, a violent extremism component where there is both capability and intent to carry out an attack, or the disinformation is state-sponsored and targeting New Zealand. The Intelligence and Security Act 2017 is clear on the role of the security and intelligence agencies with respect to freedom of expression, including views influenced by mis- and disinformation. The NZSIS does not conduct mass surveillance of the internet and has no role in monitoring ordinary political discussion.

You may be interested in the wider work underway to strengthen New Zealand's resilience to disinformation. Disinformation (i.e. false or modified information knowingly and deliberately shared to cause harm or achieve a broader aim) is perceived as distinct from misinformation (information that is false or misleading, though not created or shared with the direct intention of causing harm). Some further information about this work is available at: <https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/our-programmes/national-security/strengthening-resilience-disinformation>.

You may also be interested in the NZSIS's recent publication *New Zealand's Security Threat Environment 2023*, which provides further information about current national security threats facing New Zealand, which are within our mandate and the functions of the NZSIS. This is available online at: <https://www.nzsis.govt.nz/assets/NZSIS-Documents/New-Zealands-Security-Threat-Environment-2023.pdf>

Review

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact oa.privacy@nzsis.govt.nz.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that the NZSIS proactively publishes OIA responses in accordance with the expectations of Te Kawa Mataaho/the Public Service Commission. We intend to publish this response (with your personal information removed) on the NZSIS website. Publication of such responses is done on a quarterly basis.

Ngā mihi



Andrew Hampton

Te Tumu Whakarae mō Te Pā Whakamarumarū
Director-General of Security