



22 May 2025

9(2)(a)

Dear 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 23 April 2025 to the Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

- 1) *Knowing what a woman is would seem self evident. Therefore what is the MfE's working definition of a woman?*
- 2) *Does MfE have any diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI) initiatives, programmes or plans? Can I see copies?*
- 3) *Has MfE done any LGBTQIA+ training or have any initiatives? Can I have copies?*
- 4) *What did MfE spend on LGBTQIA+ training or initiatives in 2024?*
- 5) *Does MfE use 'intersectionality' in any way. If yes how does MfE use intersectionality? Can I see a copy?*

The Ministry has provided a response to each of your questions below.

1. *Knowing what a woman is would seem self evident. Therefore what is the MfE's working definition of a woman?*

The Ministry does not maintain a specific working definition of "woman" beyond what is already established in relevant legislation. This is because, given the nature of our work, we do not find it necessary to adopt a more formal or operational definition. Our focus is on serving all New Zealanders equitably, and we rely on existing legal frameworks to guide our understanding where needed.

In particular, the Legislation Act 2019 provides that words denoting a gender include every other gender, supporting an inclusive interpretation of gendered terms in law.

Additionally, the Human Rights Act 1993 prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation, reinforcing our commitment to respecting and serving diverse communities, including Rainbow Communities

We acknowledge that gender is socially constructed and that individuals may not identify within a binary framework. Our approach is therefore guided by inclusivity and respect for all gender identities, in alignment with the principles of public service and human rights.

2. *Does MfE have any diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI) initiatives, programmes or plans? Can I see copies?*

Tui Raumata is the Ministry's diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy, updated in 2022 with a 3-year work programme. This strategy aims to grow the diversity of our workforce and ensure

mechanisms are in place to provide a culturally and psychologically safe environment for all kaimahi. A copy of this strategy document has been provided to you in full, as listed in the attached document schedule.

The Ministry reports to the Public Service Commission on our diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives under Papa Pounamu every year. The most recent report is publicly available on the Ministry's website, here: environment.govt.nz/publications/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-kia-toipoto-and-papa-pounamu-combined-report/.

The Ministry's gender and ethnic pay gap action plan is the strategy to reduce gender and ethnic pay gaps at the Ministry. This is reported to the Public Service Commission under Kia Toipoto and is publicly available on the Ministry's website, here: environment.govt.nz/publications/gender-and-ethnic-pay-gaps-action-plan/

As these two documents are already publicly available to you, I am refusing these documents in full under section 18(d) of the Act as the information is publicly available on the Ministry's website.

In March 2022, the Ministry launched our Gender Affirmation & Transition policy. A copy of the Gender Affirmation and Transition Policy and the accompanied guidance has been provided to you in full.

The Ministry has been awarded the Rainbow Tick, Gender Tick and is currently in the process of gaining the Accessibility Tick.

For more information about these policies and initiatives relating to diversity, equity and inclusion at the Ministry is available on our website, here: environment.govt.nz/about-us/jobs/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-at-mfe/

3. Has MfE done any LGBTQIA+ training or have any initiatives? Can I have copies?

In the 2022/23 financial year, training was provided by Toitū Takatāpui to the Ministry. This training was held in group workshops that focused on understanding the scope of the term "Rainbow", to understand why this matters in the workplace and why it matters to the Ministry. The Ministry does not have any documents relating to this workshop and therefore must refuse this part of the request under section 18(e) as the information requested does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

Additionally, the Ministry purchased an online learning module from Toitū Takatāpu which is available to all staff on the Ministry's learning management system. We are unable to provide this training module to you as it is a SCORM file. A SCORM file is a ZIP archive that contains the files and data needed to deliver online learning content through a Learning Management System and it not accessible without this software.

Therefore, we are releasing a summary of this training module under section 16(1)(e) of the Act. This training module covers the same topics as the workshop and has been designed to give a wider range of staff a basic understanding of the Rainbow Tick and why this work matters. It is an interactive module that specifically covers the meaning of commonly used terms within Rainbow communities in New Zealand, LGBTTQIA+ inclusion at work and workplace allyship.

4. What did MfE spend on LGBTQIA+ training or initiatives in 2024?

The Ministry did not spend any funds on LGBTQIA+ training or initiatives during 2024.

5. Does MfE use 'intersectionality' in any way. If yes how does MfE use intersectionality? Can I see a copy?"

The Ministry does not use 'intersectionality'. There is however an understanding of intersectionality and the compounding effects for kaimahi who identify in multiple minority communities.

The current review of the Ministry's Tui Raumata (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion work programme) has identified the intersectionality that is experienced by staff and the compounding impact that is experienced. This will be taken into consideration in the formulation of the next Tui Raumata work programme.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of my decision to withhold information relating to this request, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on their website at: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Please note that due to the public interest in our work the Ministry for the Environment publishes responses to requests for official information on our [OIA responses page](#) shortly after the response has been sent. If you have any queries about this, please feel free to contact our Ministerial Services team: ministerials@mfe.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely



Tracey Kaio
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Ministry for the Environment | Manatū Mō Te Taiao

Document schedule

Document no.	Document date	Content	Decisions	OIA sections applied
1	June 2022	Tui Raumata	Released in full	
2	24 January 2025	Diversity, equity and inclusion: Kia Toipoto and Papa Pounamu combined report	Refused in full	18(d)
3	8 December 2023	Gender and ethnic pay gaps action plan July 2022 – June 2024	Refused in full	18(d)
4	March 2022	Gender Affirmation and Transition Policy	Released in full	
5	March 2022	Guidelines: Gender Affirmation and Transition Policy	Released in full	