

01/08/23

By email to: [REDACTED]

Tēnā Koe [REDACTED]

OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST 2023/25

I refer to your Official Information Act (OIA) request dated 4 July 2023. The information you have requested, and the Electoral Commission's response follows.

- 1. Please document all events during the term of the Ardern/Hipkins Labour Government when any person employed, contracted or retained in any manner by the Electoral Commission has acted as a representative of the Electoral Commission and attended meetings or otherwise interacted in a substantive way with members of organised crime organisations in New Zealand.*

Examples of organised crime organisations include but are not limited to the Mongrel Mob, the Headhunters and Black Power.

Part of the Commission's role is to raise awareness with the public on how to get ready to vote. This includes enrolment and voting period information. The Commission also addresses any barriers to participation through building community understanding of voting eligibility for all New Zealanders, why voting is important, and to support confidence for voters to take part.

Therefore, we include a broad range of communities in our planning and engagement activity. It is part of the Commission's statutory role to work with all communities to help them understand and take part in elections, and support eligible voters to meet their legal obligation to be enrolled.

We have understood your requested period for engagements as beginning from October 2017. A timeline of event attendance is publicly available and can be found on the New Zealand Parliament website [Written questions - New Zealand Parliament \(www.parliament.nz\)](https://www.parliament.nz). Please see responses provided to Written Parliamentary Questions 20089, 20116, 20117, 20120, 20121, 21022, 20127, 20210, 20281, 20285, 20287, 20292, 20309, 20311, and 20312.

One further engagement occurred in 2018 where the Commission was invited by a gang leader to attend an information session with Black Power members at Ruamatā Marae in Rotorua.

2. *Please also provide all documents that shed light on the degree to which this corrupt behaviour on the part of the Electoral Commission is known to specific members of the senior leadership team and board of the Electoral Commission.*

As noted in the earlier response, the Commission has an important statutory obligation to engage all New Zealanders in support of them exercising their democratic rights.

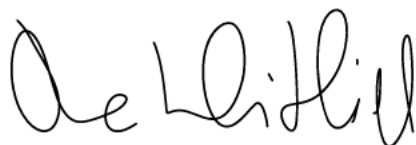
Information provided to Senior Leadership on operational matters is generally thematic in nature, high level reporting, and/or associated with planning specific electoral events such as the Māori Electoral Option or a General Election. We have only included material within scope of your request, we have redacted parts that are out of scope, and we have redacted the name of an individual who no longer works for the Commission in order to protect their privacy. A summary is provided below:

- MEO 2018 – Tamati Report 2019: During the 2018 Māori Electoral Option (MEO) campaign a list of suggested groups and stakeholders was provided to senior leaders which noted gangs as a potential contact point.
- CE Planning 2020: A planning document for the 2020 General Election similarly noted gangs as a potential contact when engaging with Māori communities.
- MEO 2023 Dashboard: During the 2023 MEO campaign, dashboard reporting provided to senior leaders featured a range of engagement activity. One of these reports contained reference to recent hui with the Mongrel Mob.
- GE SEP Plan for all regions; GE SEP Plan for Te Tai Tokerau: General Election planning documents for the 2023 General Election noting gangs as a potential contact when engaging with Māori communities in the regions.

In the interests of transparency, we release responses to Official Information Act requests every 3 months. We will publish this response with your personal details redacted.

You have the right under section 28(3) of the Act to make a complaint to the Ombudsman if you are not satisfied with the response to your request. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi,



Shane Whitfield
Director Strategic Engagement & Partnerships