

OC250374

19 May 2025

Tēnā koe

I refer to your email/letter dated 16 April 2024, requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

“All reports, submissions, aide memoires, briefings, reports, analysis, and sent, held, or received by your organisation in relation to updates to Diversity and Inclusion, or Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), or Belonging and Inclusion, regulation policies, plans, and strategies including but not limited to:

- The development, implementation, or evaluation of diversity, equity and inclusion policies, strategies, plans, and regulations.*
- The Public Service (Repeal of Diversity and Inclusiveness Requirements) Amendment Bill.*
- Communications with New Zealand First and other coalition partners concerning Diversity and inclusion policies (or similar policies/regulations) and the proposed repeal.*
- Assessments or analysis of the effects of removing DEI or similar regulations from public service legislation.*

Timeframe: From January 1, 2024, to the date of this request”.

Our current DEI action plan, which is available on the Ministry website [here](#), and two documents fall within the scope of your request answering *“The development, implementation, or evaluation of diversity, equity and inclusion policies, strategies, plans, and regulations.”* of your request. The two documents are detailed in the document schedule attached as Annex 1. The schedule outlines how the documents you requested have been treated under the Act.

Certain information is withheld under the following sections of the Act:

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 9(2)(a) | to protect the privacy of natural persons |
| 9(2)(g)(i) | free and frank expression |

With regard to the information that has been withheld under section 9 of the Act, I am satisfied that the reasons for withholding the information at this time are not outweighed by public interest considerations that would make it desirable to make the information available.

There have been no reports, submissions, aide memoires, briefings, reports, or analysis sent, held, or received by the Ministry from 1 January 2024 regarding the following three areas:

- The Public Service (Repeal of Diversity and Inclusiveness Requirements) Amendment Bill.
- Communications with New Zealand First and other coalition partners concerning Diversity and inclusion policies (or similar policies/regulations) and the proposed repeal.
- Assessments or analysis of the effects of removing DEI or similar regulations from public service legislation.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review of this response by the Ombudsman, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on the Ombudsman's website www.ombudsman.parliament.nz

The Ministry publishes our Official Information Act responses, and the information contained in our reply to you may be published on the Ministry's website. Before publishing we will remove any personal or identifiable information.

Nāku noa, nā



Suzanne Williams
Manager, Human Resources

Annex 1

Doc#	Date	Document	Decision on release
1	31 March 2025	Senior Leadership Team Meeting Paper – Employee Led Networks Update	Released with redactions under s9(2)(a) and 9(2)(g)(i)
2	31 March 2025	Employee Led Networks Sponsor Guide	Released in full

Te Rōpu Kaiarahi Matua te kahui hautu | Senior Leadership Team Meeting Paper

Meeting date	Monday 3 March 2025
Title	Employee Led Networks - Update
Author	s 9(2)(a) Senior HR Adviser
Action required	Review and Note

Purpose

- 1 To review and note the actions being taken to revive and re-establish the Employee Led Networks (ELNs) with support from SLT.

Recommendations

- 2 We recommend that **SLT**
 - a **Note** that each of the ELNs are at different stages of development.
 - b **Note** that each of the ELNs require different levels of support.
 - c **Review** the guidance provided on how to be a good executive sponsor as you begin to engage with your ELN.

Executive Summary

- 3 When the Ministry developed our Kia Toipoto Action plan 2025, we committed to reinvigorating / re-establishing our six Employee Led Networks as a key lever to improving our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI).
- 4 The networks are at different stages of their development lifecycle.
- 5 The Senior Leadership Team offered executive sponsorship and nominated one member for each network.
- 6 With support from Te Puna Huihuinga Kaimahi | Employee Led Networks, HR has developed some guidance for SLT in their role executive sponsors to the ELNs. (Attached)

Background

- 7 Further engagement by the HR team with the ELNs has identified that each Network is at varying stages of their development lifecycle:

Network	Sponsor	Status
Wāhine Women's Network	s 9(2)(a)	Well established with a functioning committee and appetite to engage with their Executive Sponsor. This engagement has already begun.
Social Committee	s 9(2)(a)	Well established with a functioning committee and appetite to engage with their Executive Sponsor. HR working with social committee lead to establishment best way to bring Brent into the fold
Māori & Pasifika Network	s 9(2)(a)	The network lead s 9(2)(a) has recently left the Ministry leaving a leadership for this network. HR is working with members of the network to establish a leadership group and regular hui (meeting cycle). This group will establish the most appropriate way to bring in the executive sponsor.
Rainbow Network	s 9(2)(a)	The network lead s 9(2)(a) has also recently left the Ministry leaving a leadership gap. HR is currently working with the remaining members of this network to establish a leadership function and will identify the best way to engage with their executive sponsor
Disability Network	s 9(2)(a)	This network has a leadership vacancy. HR is currently working with the members of this network to establish a leadership function and will establish the best way to engage with their executive sponsor
Eco Network	s 9(2)(a)	This network has a leadership vacancy. HR is currently working to identify members of this network to establish a leadership function and will establish the best way to engage with their executive sponsor

Barriers to participation and possible solutions / mitigation

- 8 Through regular engagement (formal and informal), the following barriers have been identified that prevent our staff from regularly engaging with ELNs:

Barrier	Explanation	Solution / mitigation
<u>Time</u>	Many staff find it difficult to commit the time to attend hui, and even when they do, will often need to reschedule or withdraw at the last minute due to work pressures.	The communications and engagement strategy will be clear with Leaders in particular, about the need to ensure time can be allocated to staff that express and interest in participation. This will be reinforced by regular communication from SLT (as a whole and as Executive Sponsors).
<u>Cynicism</u>	Staff from across multiple networks have shared that they don't feel like leaders across the Ministry have not and will not support ELN Kaupapa. It has also been suggested that even if ELNs do gain traction with SLT and the wider leadership rōpū (group), s 9(2)(g)(i)	Staff will see, hear and feel our leaders (in particular SLT) walk the talk. This is primarily through their engagement with ELNs as executive sponsors, and through regular updates via the comms channels such as Kete and All-MoT.
<u>Change fatigue</u>	Anecdotally, our people have felt the effects of constant change. Some staff have expressed a concern that committing time and effort into ELNs might be perceived that they aren't busy enough in their job and that might be considered during the next change process.	SLT and leaders across the Ministry will be emphatic that participation in ELNs will be considered as an integral part of the role of anyone choosing to participate. This will be reinforced through the comms and engagement plan.

Next steps

- 9 HR will continue to work with each of the ELNs to gauge their readiness to engage with their executive sponsor and will facilitate this engagement.
- 10 Where a leader (or leaders) is not currently known for an ELN, HR will work with members of that network to establish a leadership function and will facilitate engagement with the executive sponsor.

Attachments/Appendices/Schedules

- 1 Attachment A: ELN executive sponsor guide

Employee Led Networks |

A guide for network executive sponsors

Te Pūtake | Purpose

This document contains information on:

- the purpose of the Employee-Led Network (ELN) executive sponsor
- the Public Service ELN context

Tā te Kaiarataki | Executive sponsorship

Purpose

Executive sponsors champion ELNs at the executive and senior leader level. They provide strategic guidance and work alongside the networks to help them realise their vision, achieve their goals and desired outcomes.

Objectives for sponsorship can include:

- encouraging staff to join ELNs
- maximising opportunities to mature diversity and inclusion across the Ministry and wider Public Service through increasing the reach and impact of ELNs
- increasing visibility and profile of ELNs for continued growth and engagement
- ensuring the purpose and activities of ELNs align with the strategic direction and values of the Ministry and wider Public Service

Functions

The executive sponsor has two important functions:

- providing strategic guidance and
- providing functional support.

Strategic guidance examples:

- Regularly updating and championing ELN achievements and activities to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and wider Ministry.
- Being a conduit between the network and SLT and at a cross-agency level, governance groups or committees (for example Papa Pounamu, Rainbow Chief Executives Champion group or other Pou leads).
- Finding, creating and enabling opportunities for ELNs to contribute to or develop system-focussed work, such as connecting Māori & Pacific Network to Te Ara Whiti or Ministry for Pacific Peoples strategic initiatives.
- Guiding and advising the networks to align with the Ministry's strategic goals, outcomes and values.

- Guiding and advising the ELN around context and political nuances of operating in the Ministry and wider Public Service – for example, political neutrality, conflicts of interest and role clarity as Public Service representatives.
- Encouraging and enabling opportunities for collaboration between ELNs.

Functional support examples:

- Reviewing, endorsing and supporting ELN activities and initiatives outlined in their annual plan or terms of reference.
- Reviewing and endorsing the ELN foundation documents – for example terms of reference and annual reporting.
- Staying up to date with other networks and cross-agency ELN activities and strategic direction. For example, reading and noting any cross-agency ELN reports as collated and shared by Te Puna Huihuinga Kaimahi Employee-Led Network Team.

Adding value through involvement in ELN activities

The executive sponsor should take an active and visible interest in the business and activities of the network. Visible involvement in activities raises the profile and visibility of the ELN, shows active allyship, and reinforces the value that ELNs bring to the Public Service.

Suggested involvement and activities:

- Meeting regularly with the ELN governance group/steering committee.
- Attending high-profile hui for example ELN annual business meetings.
- Providing a 'listening ear' to the goals and aspirations of the network.
- Valuing the feedback and ideas from ELNs.
- Participating in ELN activities such as:
 - o speaker events
 - o conferences
 - o workshops.
- Looking for and making use of opportunities through senior leader peers to maximise reach and impact of their ELN across the Ministry and wider Public Service.
- Contributing to and endorsing network reports (like annual reports), policies and communications.
- Encouraging, supporting, and enabling collaborative, intersectional work between the network and other organisations and cross-agency ELNs.

Qualities of an executive sponsor

An executive sponsor is ideally a senior executive leader. Preferably a member of SLT or a well-regarded senior leader seeking to enrich or develop their leadership skills through sponsoring a network.

An executive sponsor should have an interest in the network and their role and professional values should align with the network's kaupapa (purpose).

Lived experience as a member of the population group the ELN represents is beneficial but not mandatory. Awareness, understanding and empathy for the needs and aspirations of the people of the ELN is essential.

An executive sponsor practises and models inclusive leadership. They understand how they can use active allyship to advance the interests of the network for greater reach and impact across the Public Service.

Dos and don'ts

Here's a quick tip guide on what to do and what not do as you embark upon your relationship with your ELN

Do	Don't
Be enthusiastic and have lots of energy	Try and take over the Network
Bring your strategic hat – connect Kaupapa to strategic goals, outcomes and values	

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