

27 March 2024

K Humphreys  
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Tēnā koe K Humphreys

Thank you for your email of 2 March 2024 to Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities requesting information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), including clarification of our response to your request dated 1 March 2024. Please note, the Act does not require Kāinga Ora to create information or form an opinion in order to respond to a request. The following parts of your email have been identified as being requests for official information and have been responded to below.

- 1. Are you suggesting that K/O staff have an income comparable to WINZ or MSD beneficiary? That staff are living in emergency housing and cannot feed and house their children? That staff somehow are assessed as being more in need, get public housing when there has been an increase in demand and growing.*

The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) is the agency responsible for managing the Housing Register and assessing the eligibility of all individuals on the Housing Register for social housing. This includes individuals who may also be Kāinga Ora staff.

- 2. How did 45 staff gain a higher priority than vulnerable applicants? You say 3 staff were declared as tenants (May to May) 2020, 15 in 2021, 5 in 2022 & 12 in 2023 then from 31-May-2023 to 19-Feb-2024 ten staff declared themselves to be K/O tenants. So in less than 3 yrs & 8 months forty-five staff have appropriated 45 properties which could be construed as unfair enrichment given the majority of housing applicants would have an annual income of less than \$30,000. You do not state whether this was for the Lower Hutt region or for the whole of NZ.*

To clarify our response on 1 March 2024, we do not have 45 staff members who are also tenants. The data provided to you detailed the annual number of staff member declarations where, as part of our conflict-of-interest register, they have declared they were currently a Kāinga Ora tenant. However, it should be noted that these figures are snapshots in time. Each year, the data is refreshed and recounted. There may be cases where a staff member remains in their home and is counted across multiple years. Therefore, this data should not be treated as cumulative.

Please also note that the data provided to you on 1 March 2024 was national data recorded for the whole of New Zealand.

- 3. Were these staff members offered housing of their choosing by K/O's in-house allocation team?*

Kāinga Ora matches homes to individuals and families on the MSD Housing Register. Placement decisions are based on information people provide to MSD when applying for social housing. Key information includes preferred locations, number of bedrooms needed, amenities and proximity to support services, employment, and schools. Kāinga Ora also conducts pre-placement interviews before making its placement decisions to best match people to the surrounding community, and available amenities.

These processes do not differ if the individual being allocated a home is a Kāinga Ora staff member.

- 4. Were any staff taken from the housing register for declining an offer of housing due to area or the rental being a dump?*

Individuals are not taken off the register for declining offers. As previously mentioned, MSD is responsible for managing the housing register.

- 5. Has K/O undertaken any independent audit of staff declarations regarding their applications for K/O housing?*

Kāinga Ora has not conducted any audits of staff declarations where staff have declared they are a Kāinga Ora tenant. Additionally, Kāinga Ora has not conducted any audits in relation to any staff members' housing applications. An individuals' eligibility for social housing is assessed and handled by MSD.

- 6. You say staff must follow the Public Service Commission's Principles and Values. I was more interested in K/O's Code of Conduct. I would like that Code disclosed in the Close to Home Leaflet so tenants are better informed regarding conduct and if disclosed, tenants will be better informed in a positive manner, rather than the regular back-patting articles. Why was I not given a copy of the Code?*

Please find attached a copy of the 'Policy: Standards of Integrity and Conduct (POL-337)' which is being released to you in full.

- 7. When I assert a staff member(s) have lied, are they required to provide a sworn statement to back themselves?*

Our People Team are responsible for investigating issues that arise in relation to staff conduct, including allegations of lying. Determining whether an employee needs to provide a statement in response to an allegation of misconduct depends on whether an investigation is launched, the terms of reference for the investigation, and how the investigation itself progresses.

- 8. I made 2 complaints about K/O Lower Hutt to K/O's Integrity Line & 2 to K/O's Complaints Commissioner. I had much difficulty finding any information on this Commission & of course K/O do the bare minimum to inform tenants of their options. I did not receive a response to my 4 serious complaints. No evidence of where my complaints disappeared to within K/O was given. I request, as with the Code of Conduct, full details and operational scope of that Commission is published regularly in The Close to Home leaflet. All tenants receive that publication. Not all tenants want to burrow about in K/O's dark portals.*

To clarify our previous response to you on 1 March 2024, the Complaints Commissioner position no longer exists within Kāinga Ora. As such, we do not have any record of having received a complaint via the Complaints Commissioner. If you wish to provide Kāinga Ora with a copy of your complaint, we will ensure it is actioned appropriately.

- 9. Who at K/O are responsible for disclosing matters to customers in the spirit of transparency?*

The answer to this question would depend on the issue that needs to be disclosed. We would be pleased to respond to this part of your request if you clarify it further.

- 10. Why has Mr Badman stated that heat pumps can aggravate respiratory health conditions? This is EXTREMELY SERIOUS and could K/O's decision to install heat pumps be regarded as reckless and at risk of compromising tenants' health? Why have tenants not been informed of*

*this risk to health especially as some people assume they may have a minor infection and not anything more serious? What is K/O policy?*

To clarify our previous response dated 1 March 2024, we are not medical experts, but we understand that it is not the heat pump itself, but the circulation of the air created by the heat pump, which lifts dust and other particles in the air, that may aggravate a specific individuals' health conditions. All our heat pumps installed are fitted with filters that minimise particulates in the air. Kainga Ora will install a wood burner for a tenant if their need for this form of heating is confirmed by a medical professional.

*11. I requested my OIA request regarding K/O circumventing their transfer policy regarding myself, be passed on to the Kainga Ora Board as K/O have a duty to report its own negligence. Mr Badman replied: NOTED. Please confirm whether my OIA request and my ongoing concerns are to be forwarded or not. What is K/O policy?*

Please note that the Board is not involved in the day-to-day operations of Kāinga Ora. The Board sets the direction that the rest of the business implements, but there is no requirement for Board members to be involved in individual tenancy matters.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of my decision on your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or Freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that Kāinga Ora proactively releases its responses to official information requests where possible. Our response to your request may be published at <https://kaingaora.govt.nz/publications/official-information-requests/>, with your personal information removed.

Nāku noa, nā



Rachel Kelly  
**Manager, Government Relations**