Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board

Official information and privacy policy

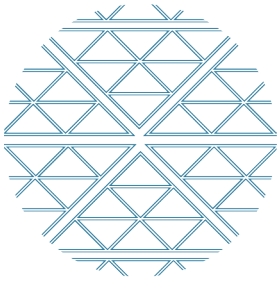
Board's approach to handling information

The Board is subject to the Official Information Act 1982 and has obligations under the Privacy Act 2020. This policy sets out how the Board deals with its obligations under these pieces of legislation.

This policy applies to Board members, all Board staff, and any Board contractors or agents (collectively referred to as the "Board" in this policy).

Values statement

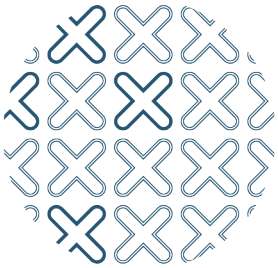
All information collected, held, and used by the Board is treated with care and respect in accordance with our legal obligations and our values.



Mahi tahi
Working together



Manaakitanga
Protecting



Whakapono
Leading with integrity



Kia Māia
Having courage

Meaning of official information

The Official Information Act defines official information as any information held by the Board irrespective of the form it is in, eg hard copy, electronic, memory, draft, final version. However, the definition of official information does not include[1] the following (meaning these forms of information are not subject to the Official Information Act):

- information provided as part of a commission of inquiry (evidence or submissions)
- information subject to orders under the Inquiries Act 2013

[1] Amongst other things

- communications or correspondence between the Ombudsman and the Board relating to an investigation by the Ombudsman
- communications or correspondence between the Privacy Commissioner and the Board relating to an investigation by the Privacy Commissioner
- information contained in a victim impact statement.

Meaning of personal information

The Privacy Act defines personal information as information about an identifiable natural person but does not include a deceased person.

What legislation applies

Privacy Act - applies to requests by a person for information about themselves.

Official Information Act – applies to any information held by the Board.

Official Information Act requests

The Board recognises that disclosing information it holds contributes to:

- effective participation
- transparency
- accountability
- access.

The Board also recognises the importance of protecting information it holds in appropriate circumstances and on appropriate grounds.

Privacy Act requests

In dealing with personal information, the Board:

- acknowledges the importance of personal privacy
- seeks to protect the privacy of any person about whom it holds personal information
- treats all personal information it holds lawfully and respectfully
- recognises privacy and security considerations in all its work processes
- supports people's rights to access and seek correction of their personal information
- cooperates fully with the Privacy Commissioner in carrying out their functions under the Privacy Act
- acts responsibly, quickly, appropriately, and transparently where there is a privacy breach
- supports and encourages a culture of caution, awareness, and accountability in all dealings with personal information.

Receiving requests

All requests under the Privacy Act should be discussed with the Board's Privacy Officer.

All requests under the Official Information Act should be provided to the Board's General Counsel.

Requests for information under the Privacy Act or Official Information Act do not have to reference the respective Acts, and can be made verbally or in writing.

Process for handling requests

All requests are acknowledged on receipt by email regardless of the form of the request (written or oral). Subject to the Board's right to extend the time for responding to a request, the person is advised of the final due date for a response to their request (20 working days from receipt).

Urgent requests

Where a person has asked that their request be considered urgently, the Board considers their request for urgency.

The Board requires reasons where urgency is requested and, where appropriate, the urgency request should be supported by appropriate supporting material.

When making a decision on a request for urgency, the Board considers:

- the reasons given for the urgency
- the volume of information involved
- the nature of the information requested and how it is held
- how the information will be released
- whether the Board must consult with any other party or parties before making a decision on the request
- whether according priority to an urgent request would unreasonably interfere with the Board's other business.

A person is notified of the Board's decision on urgency as soon as possible.

Initial assessment

An initial assessment is carried out of all information requests. This involves:

- identifying the information that has been requested
- seeking clarification from the person if required
- assisting the person with their request if necessary
- determining whether the Board holds the information requested
- assessing the scope of the request
- assessing the resource needed to provide a response to the request
- determines whether the request can be met within the 20 working day timeframe.

If the Board determines that it cannot provide the information requested within the 20 working day timeframe, it notifies the person in writing of its intention to extend the time for responding[2] and provides a date by which the information will be provided.

Examples of reasons why the Board may not be able to meet the 20 working day timeframe include where:

- it is necessary to consult with other parties and this may take some time
- large volumes of information are involved
- the Board may have to search through large volumes of information to identify information covered by the request
- information must be retrieved from archives and may involve a lot of searching to identify.

Transferring requests

Where the Board determines that it does not hold the information requested, it identifies which agency may hold the information and transfers the request. The Board notifies the person if their request has been transferred.

If the Board does not hold the information and does not know who would, it notifies the person and closes the request.

Responding to requests

Wherever possible, the Board provides information requested under the Official Information Act in the manner preferred by the person making the request. Where this isn't possible, eg for security reasons, the Board works with the person to find an alternative acceptable manner of providing the information.

Where the Board is concerned about the effect of releasing information but is not going to withhold it, it may:

- release the information with a disclaimer
- release the information subject to an explanation
- impose a condition that the information is not published unless the explanation is included.

Charging for information

Where the Board is considering charging for information, it will advise the person of the likely charge and of their right to make a complaint about the charge or the amount of the charge to the Ombudsman (for Official Information Act requests) or Privacy Commissioner (for Privacy Act requests).

The Board charges for providing information in accordance with Charging Guidelines for Official Information Act 1982 Requests by the Ministry of Justice.

[2] Section 15A Official Information Act

Where possible, the Board will work with the person to see if their request could be refined so that it would no longer be necessary to charge for the information.

The Chief Executive may waive, in whole or in part, any charge for providing information.

Withholding information and refusing requests

The Board only withholds information on grounds permitted under the Official Information Act and where it considers that it is necessary to withhold that information. The Board withholds the minimum amount of information necessary given the reasons for withholding.

The Board has regard to the Ombudsman's guidance when considering withholding information and records its reasons where it does withhold.

When determining the public interest in relation to any request under the Official Information Act, the Board has regard to the following kinds of considerations:

- the importance of information in enabling effective participation in the Board's business
- promoting the accountability of the Board
- promoting understanding of the Board's role and how it carries it out
- enhancing respect for the law
- promoting good governance in New Zealand.

If the Board withholds information or refuses an Official Information Act request, it advises the person who made the request of:

- the fact that information is being withheld or a request is being refused
- the reasons for the withholding or refusal
- their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman and where to find information about doing so.

The Board cooperates fully with any inquiry or investigation conducted by the Ombudsman into a complaint about a decision to:

- charge for information
- withhold information
- refuse an Official Information Act request.

Collecting and using personal information

The Board only collects and uses the personal information necessary to carry out its functions under the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act 2006. All collection, use, storage, disclosure, and retention of personal information complies with the requirements of the Privacy Act, including its obligations where it must collect personal information from a third party.

Board staff only access personal information that is required for them to perform their roles. Personal information is handled sensitively and appropriately when in use, securely stored when not in use, and deleted or disposed of when appropriate.

Any remote access to personal information by staff is carried out lawfully, appropriately, and in a safe and secure manner taking into account the location from which the information is accessed. Any device used to access personal information remotely has appropriate security settings to protect the information.

The Board publishes a detailed privacy statement covering how it approaches personal information on its website.

Accessing and correcting personal information

The Board provides a person with a copy of any personal information held about them (**access request**) and considers any request to correct errors in that information or attached a statement of correction sought (**correction request**) when requested. Personal information provided to a person is provided in the manner requested wherever possible. Where that is not possible, the Board discusses options for providing the information with the person.

The Board takes appropriate steps to assure itself of the identity of a person making an access request before providing the information and ensures that the information is provided to them only. Where the person has authorised another to receive the information, the Board ensures it has written and signed authorisation and the information is provided only to the authorised person.

The Board only refuses to provide a copy of personal information and/or correct or attach a statement of correction sought in circumstances permitted under the Privacy Act.

Before refusing an access or correction request, the Board considers whether it is possible to grant the request by imposing conditions on the use or disclosure of the information or granting access to the information subject to deletions or alterations.

If the Board declines an access or correction request or grants a request subject to deletions or alterations, it advises the person, as applicable, of:

- the grounds on which the request is refused
- the reasons for the deletions or alterations
- their right to make a complaint to the Privacy Commissioner.

The Board cooperates fully with any inquiry or investigation by the Privacy Commissioner.

Privacy breach

Actions in relation to personal information that will be a breach of privacy are:[3]

- unauthorised access
- accidental access
- disclosure (including in relation to personal information sought from a third party)

[3] Refer section 112, Privacy Act

- alteration
- loss
- destruction
- something that prevents the Board accessing the information (either temporarily or permanently).

These actions will be a breach of a person's privacy whether or not:

- they are caused by someone inside or outside the Board
- they are attributable to the Board (in whole or in part)
- they are ongoing.

Responding to a privacy breach

As soon as the Board becomes aware of a privacy breach or potential privacy breach, it:

- acts immediately to contain the breach
- advises the Privacy Officer
- conducts preliminary enquiries into the matter
- identifies whether it is a notifiable breach.

Notifiable breaches

A breach will be notifiable if the Board reasonably believes it has or could cause serious harm to the person or people the information relates to. When assessing whether a breach has or may cause serious harm, the Board considers:

- what action it has taken to reduce the harm following the breach
- how sensitive the personal information is
- the nature of any harm that may be caused
- who has obtained the information as a result of the breach
- whether the information is protected by any security measures
- any other matter that may be relevant in the circumstances.

If the breach is notifiable, the Board promptly notifies the Privacy Commissioner.

Responding to a breach

The Board takes all appropriate steps to minimise harm to affected individuals in the event of a privacy breach whether it is notifiable or not.

Actions the Board may take to response to a breach include:

- immediately notifying the Privacy Officer, who will notify the Chief Executive
- identifying whose information was involved
- determining the sensitivity of the information
- identifying who received the information
- identifying how the breach occurred
- preventing any further breach (if it could be ongoing)
- determining appropriate steps to address the breach
- taking steps to address the breach including notifying the Privacy Commissioner if appropriate

- reviewing the response
- identifying learnings
- taking any steps to reduce the risk of any future breach.

The Board has regard to all relevant information and guidance from the Privacy Commission when responding to a privacy breach.

Privacy Officer

The Chief executive appoints a staff member with the appropriate experience, skills, and seniority as the Board's Privacy Officer.

The Privacy Officer is responsible for:

- providing advice and assistance with privacy matters
- monitoring the practitioner register for compliance with the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act 2006 and the Privacy Act
- drafting and reviewing policies and procedures relating to or impacting on privacy matters and information security
- reviewing policies and procedures of contactors and agents of the Board relating to or impacting on privacy matters and information security
- managing, monitoring, or conducting privacy impact assessments
- managing, monitoring, or conducting privacy audits or reviews
- ensuring any complaint relating to or involving a privacy breach or possible privacy breach is dealt with efficiently, effectively, and in accordance with any statutory timeframes
- ensuring all requests for access to or correction of personal information are dealt with lawfully and in appropriate timeframes
- reporting on privacy matters as required
- providing training on privacy and information handling.

The Privacy Officer ensures appropriate external legal or expert advice is sought on privacy matters as required.

The Privacy Officer reports to the Chief Executive about privacy matters.

Practitioner register

Under the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act, the Board is required to keep a register of registered practitioner that is available to the public[4].

The Board does not make personal information about registered practitioners available on the register unless required to do so under the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act[5].

[4] See Subpart 3 of Part 2 of the Act

[5] See section 74

Registration numbers

All practitioners are assigned a registration number. Registration numbers are unique identifiers assigned by the Board to enable the Board to carry out its functions under the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act.

Registration numbers are assigned for internal Board purposes only and do not have any official status. Registration numbers are not publicly available on the register.

Version management

Date	Details
May 2026	Approved by Chief Executive
May 2029	Next review date