



19 February 2025

Ref: DOIA-REQ-0008854

Privacy of
natural
persons

Tēnā koe Privacy of natural persons

Thank you for your email of 29 January 2025 to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

The Privacy of natural person has made reference recently to "\$4 million" spent on what it says is "whale music to heal Kauri tree science project". It makes reference to OIA requests to MBIE.

Could MBIE please provide all OIA responses provided to Privacy of natural person and any other parties that relate to the above matter?

Up to the 29 January 2025, MBIE had received one request (dated 28 August 2024) under the Act from the Privacy of natural person, requesting information on costs associated with the Oranga (Wellbeing) research project. On 4 September 2024, this request was transferred to Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research (MWLR) under section 14(b)(ii) of the Act, as the request was more closely aligned with the functions of MWLR as hosts for New Zealand's Biological Heritage. You can get in touch with MWLR if you would like a copy of its response to the NZ Taxpayers Union.

The Oranga (Wellbeing) research programme (the Programme) was funded out of the Strategic Science Investment Fund (SSIF) research platform to combat the spread of kauri dieback and myrtle rust. This platform is devolved funding, contracted to a host organisation. Decisions about programme funding and the activities supported have been made by the platform in line with the approved Platform Plan. The New Zealand Biological Heritage National Science Challenge hosted and implemented the platform over a five-year period from May 2019 – March 2024. Ngā Rakau Taketake funded the Programme for a total of \$4.03 million over that period. The Programme was coordinated by Te Tira Whakamātaki.

The Programme included a project entitled *Te Reo o te waonui a Tāne (the language of the domain of Tāne)* which included bioacoustics research involving sounds played in kauri forests, including whalesong. The project was a collaboration between researchers and the Pawarenga community in the Far North and included mātauranga Māori and western science techniques. Total funding for the *Te Reo o te waonui a Tāne* project was \$521,453. The research project was led by Auckland University of Technology (AUT).

You can find more information about this research on the Ngā Rakau Taketake website ([Oranga – Wellbeing – Biological Heritage NZ](#)) and on the Te Tira Whakamātaki website (<https://www.ttw.nz/oranga>).

MBIE's SSIF contract has ended with the platform and there are no projected future costs from MBIE.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request or this response, or if you require any further assistance, please contact OIA@mbie.govt.nz.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T. C. Drage'.

Trevor Drage

Manager Strategic Investments

Science System Investment and Performance