

25 March 2020

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Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

I refer to your official information request of **Wednesday 26 February 2020** for assistance in finding information relating to these questions:

'What is your definition of women? What is a woman to the Ministry for Women?'

'What is your definition of lesbian? What is a lesbian to the Ministry for Women?'

'Can you outline what the Ministry for Women has done for women attracted to the same sex? What programmes and initiatives are in place for women attracted to the same sex that are provided by the Ministry for Women?'

'Has the Ministry done any research on women in New Zealand attracted to the same sex?'

'What NGOs have provided the Ministry with any advice on women attracted to the same sex, if this has occurred?'

'Does the Ministry have an estimate of how much money it has spent on programmes and initiatives aimed at women attracted to the same sex?'

Responses to your questions are:

Question	Answer
What is your definition of women? What is a woman to the Ministry for Women?	<p>The Ministry for Women defines women as people who identify as women. This definition is inclusive of transgender women.</p> <p>For its policy work, the Ministry for Women relies on data collected by a number of other agencies, including Stats NZ. The Ministry's definition of women is consistent with those agencies – when these agencies collect gender disaggregated data, data collected includes all women and girls who identify as women and girls and all men and boys who identify as men and boys.</p>

Question	Answer
<p>What is your definition of lesbian? What is a lesbian to the Ministry for Women?</p>	<p>The Ministry has not formally defined lesbian. The Human Rights Commission states that all people, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, have the same human rights and freedoms. All sexual and gender minorities in New Zealand have these rights. This includes people who identify as lesbian.</p> <p>However, the Ministry is well aware that New Zealand women are diverse, and women's lives are not all the same. Life experiences, issues, and priorities, may vary for different groups of women, dependent on age, ethnicity, disability, income levels, employment status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and whether they have dependants.</p>
<p>Can you outline what the Ministry for Women has done for women attracted to the same sex? What programmes and initiatives are in place for women attracted to the same sex that are provided by the Ministry for Women?</p>	<p>The Ministry is the Government's principal advisor on achieving better results for women, and wider New Zealand. Its main responsibilities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policy advice on improving outcomes for women in New Zealand; • managing New Zealand's international reporting obligations in relation to the status of women; • providing suitable women nominees for appointment to state sector boards and committees; and • providing support services to the Minister for Women. <p>The Ministry considers LGBTQI+ women, including women who are attracted to the same sex, when fulfilling its responsibilities. This includes providing feedback on policy proposals led by other agencies.</p> <p>The Ministry is not a programme or initiative provider.</p>
<p>Has the Ministry done any research on women in New Zealand attracted to the same sex?</p>	<p>The Ministry has not done any research on women in New Zealand attracted to the same sex.</p> <p>Other Government agencies have done research on LGBTI young people. In 2014, the Ministry of Youth Development led consultation with the LGBTI community to better understand the issues impacting on LGBTI young people; and in 2015 an online survey about the support for LGBTI young people in schools was done to inform the Ministry of Education's <i>Bullying Prevention Guidelines</i>.</p>

Question	Answer
<p>What NGOs have provided the Ministry with any advice on women attracted to the same sex, if this has occurred?</p>	<p>No NGOs have provided the Ministry with any advice directly on women attracted to the same sex.</p> <p>The shadow reports for CEDAW, in 2017, may include advice. The link below is to the National Council of Women's submission. The Human Rights Commission's submission is on their website.</p> <p>https://www.ncwnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/CEDAW-2017-NZ-Alternate-NGO-Report-Women-Experiencing-Discrimination_Single-Page-Up.pdf</p>
<p>Does the Ministry have an estimate of how much money it has spent on programmes and initiatives aimed at women attracted to the same sex?</p>	<p>The Ministry is not a programme or initiative provider.</p>

Official Information Act responses

Please note that this response, with your personal details redacted, may be published on the Ministry's website. If you have any concerns or comments related to this, please let us know by emailing ministerialservicing@women.govt.nz, within two weeks of the date of this letter.

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



Renee Graham
Chief Executive