Manatū Wāhine
Ministry for Women

6 July 2026

Withheld 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe Withheld 9(2)(a)

OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

I refer to your official information requests of 7 & 8 June 2026 for:

Request of 7 June 2026
Part 1 — Data holdings

1. *A complete list of every dataset the Ministry currently holds relating to female economic participation, entrepreneurship, self-employment, and business ownership in Aotearoa — including for each dataset: the source, date range, whether it is published or held internally, and whether it has been provided to Cabinet or Ministers since 2020*
2. *Whether the Ministry holds any data specifically on female founder access to venture capital, angel investment, or Crown-administered innovation funding — and if so please provide that data; if not please confirm explicitly and identify which agency holds it*
3. *Whether the Ministry holds or has ever held any data on the percentage of Crown innovation funding, accelerator programme places, or venture capital that reaches female founders — broken down by year since 2020; if not please confirm explicitly*
4. *Whether the Ministry holds any data on the socioeconomic backgrounds of female founders or self-employed women in Aotearoa — including whether women from non-wealthy or non-business family backgrounds access funding at different rates; if not please confirm explicitly*
5. *Whether the Ministry holds any data on the intersection of disability, neurodivergence, and female economic participation or entrepreneurship; if not please confirm explicitly*
6. *Whether the Ministry has conducted any follow-up analysis or policy action arising from the Te Ōhanga Wāhine Māori 2024 report specifically on the capital investment gap facing wāhine Māori enterprises — and if so please provide all documents; if not please confirm explicitly*
7. *Whether the Ministry holds or has ever requested from MSD the current gender breakdown of all main benefit recipients in Aotearoa — including Jobseeker Support, Sole Parent Support, Supported Living Payment, and all other main*

benefits — as part of its mandate to advance women's economic position; if not please confirm explicitly

8. *Whether the Ministry holds any data on the gender breakdown of participants in Crown-funded start-a-business pathways — including the Flexi-Wage Self-Employment programme and the Business Training and Advice Grant — disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, and outcome; if not please confirm explicitly and identify which agency holds it*
9. *Whether the Ministry holds any analysis of the relationship between women's benefit receipt and their access to or exclusion from self-employment and business start pathways; if not please confirm explicitly*
10. *Whether the Ministry holds any data on the gender breakdown of participants in Callaghan Innovation funded programmes including the Founder and Startup Support Programme, and any outcome data for female participants beyond programme completion; if not please confirm explicitly*
11. *Whether the Ministry holds any data on the gender breakdown of recipients of Regional Business Partner Network support, NZTE support, or any other MBIE-administered business development pathway; if not please confirm explicitly and identify which agency holds it*
12. *Whether the Ministry holds any data or analysis on the relationship between women's access to independent economic participation — including self-employment and business ownership — and their ability to exit situations of domestic violence or financial abuse; if not please confirm explicitly*
13. *Whether the Ministry holds any data or analysis on the impact of housing affordability on women's capacity to achieve economic independence — including whether the requirement for dual full-time household incomes to afford home ownership in New Zealand suppresses women's ability to take entrepreneurial or self-employment risks; if not please confirm explicitly*
14. *Whether the Ministry holds any data or analysis on the role of social and cultural norms — including norms associating femininity with caregiving and risk-aversion — in suppressing women's entrepreneurial ambition, confidence, and rates of business formation in Aotearoa; if not please confirm explicitly*

Part 2 — Mandate and performance requirements

15. *All documents describing what the Ministry's statutory mandate requires it to measure, monitor, and report on in relation to women's economic participation and advancement*
16. *All current KPIs, performance measures, output targets, or outcome indicators the Ministry uses to assess whether it is improving women's economic position — and the Ministry's current performance against each measure*
17. *All documents describing how the Ministry determines whether its work is achieving meaningful improvement in women's economic outcomes — including any methodology for measuring change over time*
18. *Whether the Ministry has ever conducted or commissioned an evaluation of whether its work is producing measurable improvement in female founder capital access — and if so please provide that evaluation; if not please confirm explicitly*

19. *Whether the Ministry coordinates with MSD, MBIE, NZGCP, Callaghan Innovation, or NZTE to track women's economic outcomes across the full pipeline from benefit receipt through to self-employment, business ownership, and capital access — and if so please provide all documents describing that coordination; if not please confirm explicitly*
20. *Whether the Ministry has ever raised concerns internally or with other agencies about the absence of outcome tracking for female participants beyond accelerator programme completion — and if so please provide all documents; if not please confirm explicitly*
21. *Whether the Ministry has ever coordinated with MSD to analyse the gender dimensions of MSD's self-employment and business start pathways — including the Flexi-Wage Self-Employment programme and the Business Training and Advice Grant — and if so please provide all documents; if not please confirm explicitly*

Whether the Ministry has ever requested from MSD gender-disaggregated data on FWSE or BTAG applicants, approvals, declines, or outcomes — and if so please provide all documents; if not please confirm explicitly

Request of 8 June 2026

Part 1 — Cabinet advice and policy action

1. *Whether the Ministry has provided any advice to Cabinet on the gender investment gap in venture capital — including the University of Auckland Gender Investment Gap research finding that female-only startups received just 2.9% of capital investment in 2024 — and if so please provide that advice; if not please confirm explicitly that no such advice has been provided and provide all documents explaining why*
2. *Whether the Ministry has provided any advice to Cabinet on the economic impact of female founder capital exclusion on women's health, safety, housing security, or economic independence; if not please confirm explicitly*
3. *All documents relating to any analysis the Ministry has conducted on the downstream economic and social consequences of female-only startups receiving 2.9% of venture capital investment in Aotearoa — if no such analysis exists please confirm explicitly*
4. *Whether the Ministry has provided any advice to Cabinet arising from the Te Ōhanga Wāhine Māori 2024 report — specifically on capital investment barriers facing wāhine Māori enterprises — and if not please confirm explicitly and provide all documents explaining why*
5. *Whether the Ministry has ever provided advice to Cabinet or Ministers on the establishment of an evergreen, non-tech-exclusive, Te Tiriti-aligned capital fund for female founders in Aotearoa; if not please confirm explicitly*
6. *Whether the Ministry has provided any advice to Cabinet on the concentration of women in main benefit receipt and the structural barriers preventing women on benefit from accessing self-employment and business start pathways; if not please confirm explicitly*

7. *Whether the Ministry has provided any advice to Cabinet on the gender dimensions of the Social Investment Fund — including whether women-led enterprises are adequately represented in Social Investment Fund co-investment pathways; if not please confirm explicitly*
8. *Whether the Ministry has provided any advice to Cabinet on the gender dimensions of the Regional Business Partner Network, the MBIE AI Advisory Pilot, or any other MBIE-administered business development programme; if not please confirm explicitly*
9. *Whether the Ministry has provided any advice to Cabinet on the relationship between women's access to independent economic participation and their ability to exit situations of domestic violence or financial abuse — including whether the absence of capital pathways for female founders constitutes a safety risk for women in Aotearoa; if not please confirm explicitly*
10. *Whether the Ministry has provided any advice to Cabinet on the impact of housing affordability on women's economic independence — including whether requiring dual full-time incomes to afford home ownership suppresses women's ability to take entrepreneurial risks; if not please confirm explicitly*
11. *Whether the Ministry has provided any advice to Cabinet on how social and cultural norms suppressing female entrepreneurial ambition should be addressed through policy, funding, or public infrastructure; if not please confirm explicitly*

Part 2 — Funding pathways and co-investment mechanisms

12. *All documents describing any co-investment or funding pathway administered by or through the Ministry for Women relating to women's economic participation — including any pathway accessible through the Social Investment Fund, any philanthropic co-investment mechanism, or any other mechanism through which the Ministry directs or matches funding toward women-led enterprises; if no such pathway exists please confirm explicitly*
13. *The eligibility criteria, application process, and current status of any such pathway — including whether a women-led West Auckland community enterprise employing women from diverse backgrounds would be eligible and if so what the process is*
14. *Whether the Ministry has ever referred female founders experiencing capital access barriers to the Social Investment Fund, the Regional Business Partner Network, or any other Crown funding mechanism — and if so how many referrals have been made and what outcomes resulted; if not please confirm explicitly*
15. *All documents describing any planned or proposed new funding mechanism for women's economic participation that the Ministry has advised on or is developing*
16. *Whether the Ministry has ever provided funding, co-funding, or a funding referral to any organisation specifically to address the gender investment gap in venture capital or innovation funding in Aotearoa; if not please confirm explicitly*

Part 3 — Ministerial meeting requests

17. *All documents relating to meeting requests made to the Minister for Women in correspondence between November 2024 and June 2025 from a female founder*

identifying as Sarah August — including all internal advice on whether to grant the meeting, all drafts of responses, and all documents explaining the decision not to grant a substantive meeting (transferred to Minister for Women)

18. *Whether the Ministry has a policy or framework for responding to meeting requests from female founders or members of the public raising systemic concerns about women's economic participation — and if so please provide that policy; if not please confirm explicitly*
19. *Whether the Ministry tracks or records the number of meeting requests received from female founders or self-employed women raising capital access concerns — and if so please provide that data; if not please confirm explicitly*

Part 4 — AI and emerging risks

20. *Whether the Ministry has conducted or commissioned any analysis of the disproportionate impact of artificial intelligence and automation on female workers and female-led businesses in Aotearoa — and if so please provide that analysis; if not please confirm explicitly*
21. *Whether the Ministry has provided any advice to Cabinet on the gender dimensions of New Zealand's AI strategy — including the confirmed finding that women's jobs are three times as likely as men's to be automated by AI, that women make up 86% of workers both highly exposed to AI job loss and least able to adapt to it, and that women are 32% more likely than men to fear that using AI will be seen as cheating — all confirmed by LeanIn 2026 research; if not please confirm explicitly*
22. *Whether the Ministry holds any analysis of the intersection between AI displacement risk and women's current concentration in benefit receipt and what that means for women's long-term economic independence; if not please confirm explicitly*
23. *Whether the Ministry has engaged with any other agency regarding the gendered impacts of AI on women in Aotearoa — and if so please provide all documents describing that engagement; if not please confirm explicitly*

Part 5 — Economic forecasting and structural safety

24. *Whether the Ministry holds any economic forecasting or modelling on the long-term consequences for women's economic independence of the current housing affordability crisis — including any analysis of how requiring dual full-time incomes for home ownership affects women's capacity to exit employment, take entrepreneurial risks, or leave unsafe relationships; if not please confirm explicitly*
25. *Whether the Ministry holds any analysis of the economic preconditions required for women to be able to pursue entrepreneurship in Aotearoa — including housing security, access to capital, childcare, and freedom from financial dependence on a partner; if not please confirm explicitly*
26. *Whether the Ministry holds any analysis connecting domestic violence, financial abuse, and women's economic participation — including whether capital access barriers for female founders constitute a structural safety risk; if not please confirm explicitly*

27. *Whether the Ministry has ever provided advice to Cabinet or other agencies on the relationship between women's economic independence and their safety from domestic violence and financial abuse; if not please confirm explicitly*

Part 6 — Institutional future

28. *All documents relating to any review, proposal, or Cabinet consideration of disestablishing, restructuring, or reducing the mandate of the Ministry for Women — including any gender impact assessment of such a decision and any analysis of the consequences for women's economic outcomes (transferred to MoH)*
29. *Whether any analysis has been conducted of the consequences for female founder capital access if the Ministry for Women were disestablished — and if so please provide that analysis; if not please confirm explicitly*
30. *Whether any other Crown body has been identified as capable of assuming the Ministry's mandate for women's economic advancement — and if so please provide all documents describing that assessment; if not please confirm explicitly*

On 24 June 2026, I notified you that your request is likely to be refused under 18(f) of the Official Information Act, unless clarification or an amendment to your request was provided, and invited you to meet with Ministry for Women staff to discuss your request further. As of the date of this letter, we have not received a response to our email to amend, clarify or meet to discuss this request. Therefore, we have decided to refuse your request under section 18(f) [the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research] of the Official Information Act.

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



Reece Lind
Principal Advisor, Ministerial Services