

OIA-CE-2025-02934

4 June 2025

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Tēnā koe korua

Thank you for your email, received on 19 May 2025, to Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki) requesting information on the removal of an appropriation measure from the 2023/24 Annual Report. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

I have responded to each part of your request below.

1. *The section within the correct Act which gave effect to legalising open adoption in New Zealand as stated in the quoted text (above), ‘when open adoptions were legalised’.*

As listed below, Oranga Tamariki identified several reasons for removal of this as an appropriation measure in a 2023 review of appropriation measures. This included a reduction in request volumes due to changes in adoption practices over time.

However, I note that it is incorrect to state that these changes in practice amount to legalisation of open adoption. Thank you for identifying this mistake in our 2023/24 Annual Report.

2. *Any other justifications given for the removal of ‘The number of requests from adults seeking identifying information on birth parents...’ from Oranga Tamariki’s 2023/2024 Annual Report.*

This measure was removed for several reasons.

Firstly, the removal of the measure reflects the reduction in adopted adults seeking identifying information. Over time, as adopted adults have used the information provisions of the Adult Adoption Information Act 1985, there are fewer people who need to use the section 9 entitlement. As more and more adoptions, particularly from the mid-1980s onwards, included a measure of openness, there has also been a reduction in need for people to formally apply for information that is already known to them.

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It was also determined that legislative reform of the Adoption Act would be the right opportunity to review and identify new measures for adoption services.

In addition, the number of appropriation measures (and associated cost burden) was reduced in order to be more proportional to the funding for this appropriation category, as the collection of this data was manual and was sourced from Oranga Tamariki and the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA).

We also determined that the existing measures A1.1 (in the 2023/24 Annual Report) and A1.2 (in the 2022/23 Annual Report) provided sufficient accountability to the Crown for the Vote expenditure with a clear focus on service delivery.

Finally, the measure is not influenced by Oranga Tamariki and is not an effective measurement of Oranga Tamariki performance against the appropriation category.

- 3. The evidence to show that the removal of the data set referenced in the above quote was approved and signed off by the group within Oranga Tamariki administering the Adult Adoption Information Act.*

The 2023 review of appropriation measures included consultation within Oranga Tamariki, including with the Deputy Chief Executive responsible for adoption services.

One document has been identified as being in scope of your request:

- Governance Paper GP-23-147 – Seeking Te Riu feedback on proposed changes to 2023/24 appropriation measures

This document is attached as Appendix One. Please note that some information concerning other appropriation measures has been withheld as it is outside of the scope of your request.

- 4. A list or description of the “improvements in resources available” referred to in the 2023/2024 Annual Report quote above.*

The Oranga Tamariki Adoption Service provides a range of services to adult parties to past adoptions under the Adult Adoption Information Act and the Privacy and Official Information Acts. During this period, Oranga Tamariki developed an additional option to support adopted people whose birth father is not named on their original Birth Certificate but is named on our records. Under some circumstances, the Adoption Service may be able to trace and approach a birth father to ascertain his view about the sharing of his name and details with the adopted person. You can find more information about this on the Oranga Tamariki website [here](#).

We also developed an updated resource to support adopted people when they are searching for their birth parents. You can find this document attached as Appendix Two.

In addition, we developed some specific guidelines for people seeking information about their adoption from Court adoption records. This also applies when a family member is seeking information from the Court about an unknown family member. You can find these guidelines [here](#).

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5. *The actual number of requests from adults seeking identifying information on birth parents in the 2023/2024 year.*

In the year ending June 2024, the Adoption Service received 93 applications from adopted adults for identifying information about their birth parents.

6. *A list of the data sets published or unpublished, collated by Oranga Tamariki relating to the Adult Adoption Information Act.*

Oranga Tamariki recognises that there is public interest in the volumes of the services that are provided under the Adult Adoption Information Act 1985 and the Privacy and Official Information Acts to parties to past adoptions. The following table outlines the services provided and the respective volumes of enquiries and applications for the last four years.

Adult Adoption Information Services	Financial year			
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Total adult adoption enquiries received	896	811	796	884
Original birth certificates issued	176	140	123	122
Section 8 applications from birth parents for identifying information about their son or daughter	72	32	32	21
Section 8 applications completed by sites	51	32	29	16
Section 9 applications from adopted adults for identifying information about birth parents	177	149	118	93
Privacy Act / Official Information Act releases from adoption records	228	244	248	209
Additional mandatory searches completed	43	40	66	22
Results of birth father approaches reported to adopted person	-	-	26	11
Social work reports completed on Section 23 applications for access to court adoption records	74	72	94	80

Oranga Tamariki may make the information contained in this letter available to the public by publishing this on our website with your personal details removed.

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I trust you find this information useful. Should you have any concerns with this response, I would encourage you to raise them with Oranga Tamariki. Alternatively, you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Information about this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by contacting them on 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Allington', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Adam Allington
**General Manager Strategy Insights and Performance
System Leadership**