

2 June 2026

Official information request for Crown Law opinions
Our Ref: OIA-2526195

We refer to your official information request dated 23 April 2026, which was transferred from the Attorney-General to Crown Law on 7 May 2026:

- 1. Official Information Act request concerning the existence, or non-existence, of a Legal Opinion produced by Crown Law about the use and status of the name Aotearoa in the New Zealand passport before 1992.*
- 2. Official Information Act request concerning the existence, or non-existence, of a Legal Opinion produced by Crown Law about the use and status of the name Kawanatanga O Aotearoa as Maori translation for Government of New Zealand at any time in the past.*

Additionally, your request includes the following question:

If today in 2026 Crown Law was forced to give a legal opinion on the Governments continued or discontinued use of Aotearoa as a defact Maori name for New Zealand, would it include all the three point at the beginning of this presentation and be simpathetic to consider that;

Derived from the Treaty of Waitangi, Niu Tireni is the only official and legal Maori name for New Zealand as can be found to be so in the Maori Language Act 1985 7 2016.

Aotearoa me Te Waipounamualso has a preferred Maori use as Maori national name as shown by West Coast Iwi, whereas

Aotearoa-New Zealand demonstrates the fraudulent cultural appropriation by Pakeha settler colonialism.

In relation to your first and second requests, we have searched the physical and digital files likely to contain relevant information. We have found no record of any legal opinion by Crown Law on the matters you have identified. Accordingly, these requests are refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act 1982 as the information requested does not exist.

Your third request does not fall within the scope of the Official Information Act as you are asking Crown Law to formulate an opinion and provide it to you. It is not a request for information Crown Law already holds. Furthermore, Crown Law cannot provide legal advice to members of the public. Our role is to provide legal advice and representation to the government only.

To get help in finding a lawyer who may be able to assist you, you can visit the New Zealand Law Society's website (www.lawsociety.org.nz) where there is information on searching for a lawyer. Or you can call the Law Society on (04) 472 7837.

Alternatively, you can visit your local Citizens Advice Bureau or Community Law Centre, which may be able to help with finding a lawyer. You can find the location of your local Citizens Advice Bureau by visiting www.cab.org.nz or calling 0800 367 222, and the location of your local Community Law Centre by visiting <http://communitylaw.org.nz>.

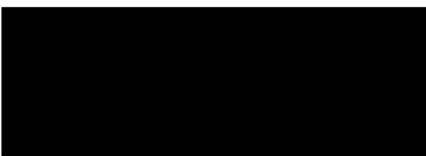
Please note that we may publish this response (with your personal details redacted), and any related documents, on Crown Law's website if we decide proactive release of this information is or may be in the public interest. If you have any concerns about this, please let us know within 10 working days 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.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact oiac@crownlaw.govt.nz.

Nāku noa, nā

Crown Law



Geoffrey Melvin
Legal Team Manager