

7 September 2021

s9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 15 August 2021 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

*I seek an explanation under the OIA legislation*

*a) with a waiting list of 20,000 desperate people waiting for a home and children living in poverty in South Auckland*

*why did you see the necessity to spend \$30000 of taxpayers money for a sculpture in your South Auckland Office ?*

*b) What is this sculpture and who carved it ?*

*c) Do you have such a surplus in your budget that you can spend this money on extravagant purchases?*

*How many more are scheduled for this year?*

*d) Do you not think that this money might have been better spent on children in poverty?*

*e) Please supply a list of sculptures or painting costing in excess of \$500 that you have in your other offices throughout the country ?*

In response to parts a) to d):

Kāinga Ora has legislated operating principles under the Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities Act 2019, that ensure we increase Māori participation in urban development, engage meaningfully with iwi and rūpu Māori, and recognise and provide for the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, wāhi tapu, and other taonga.

The Takaanini office whakairo (carving) is representative of these principles, and was commissioned to cement the mana of the relationship between the community and our kaimahi (staff). This relationship is already strongly grounded in Te Ao Māori, owing to the predominance of Māori in the communities serviced by the Takaanini office, such as Red Hill, and the mahi of Papakura Marae, which provides services to many community members who are also our customers.

The whakairo is a collaboration between mana whenua Ngāti Tamaoho and Kāinga Ora. The cost reflects the labour intensive process of creating a work of this scale, which was undertaken by a team of carvers from a local workshop, under the guidance of two tohunga whakairo (master carvers). The whakairo has been well received by our customers and other members of the local community.

Kāinga Ora spent roughly \$1.8 billion in building, repairing and upgrading homes last year. We are mindful that public money should be spent prudently. The cost of paying a team of carvers for this whakairo has represented an investment in our stewardship of cultural values and ties to the local community, and has not had a material impact on our ability to deliver homes for New Zealanders.

There is no scheduled spending on any other whakairo or sculptures for the remainder of the 2021/2022 financial year.

In response to part e) *Please supply a list of sculptures or painting costing in excess of \$500 that you have in your other offices throughout the country?*

Kāinga Ora has 40 office sites (excluding five information centres) located throughout the country. We do not have a register or list of sculptures or paintings in those offices and are unable to provide a description or cost. Some artworks have been donated by tenants, communities or staff, or are on loan, or historical.

I am therefore refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act because the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this response. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or Freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rachel Kelly". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rachel Kelly  
**Manager Government Relations**