

31 January 2020

[REDACTED]

AUCKLAND

by email:

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Official Information request and response

Thank you for your further request under the Official Information Act ("OIA") dated 20 December 2019.

You have requested in regards to a previous OIA response dated 19 December 2019 (that followed a response dated 7 August 2019):

At General Assessment 16 you indicate that documents can be read at location labelled "here" in blue. I cannot reach those documents by clicking on that blue word. I would be grateful if you would provide a direct link to them or supply them to me by an attachment to your next email

Also at 16 it is stated "and there was further correspondence." Was that correspondence made available to the board along with my application?

The link in the Board paper points to [the OIA section](#) of the NZ On Air website, where recent OIA requests are published and refers to our replies to your two previous requests [here](#) (August) and [here](#) (December). The further correspondence refers a telephone call and emails between you and me. This correspondence was not provided to the Board as is usual operating practice but members were made aware of your concerns as noted in the Board paper already provided to you.

You have also requested:

How does NZ On Air evaluate the "clear priority" of one proposal over another. Hence my questions

- 1) What objective measures did the staff use to decide [REDACTED] was NOT a priority for funding over other proposals it DID recommend to the board?*
- 2) This second evaluation of [REDACTED] suggests there are indeed some questions assessor ask when considering a proposal that were not evidence in the first assessment. Is there a list of the questions staff are required to ask when doing their evaluations?*

If so could I have a copy of them? Or would you consider publishing the evaluation questions so all producers know what they are?

If the Staff assessment process was at least partly subjective, what was said about [REDACTED] which did NOT make it a priority, in their view, over other proposals they DID recommend to the board?

I ask because the, again, second assessment seems far more positive than the first time it was offered.

Why was the timing of the broadcast an issue? Isn't audience size a more relevant issue?

If the broadcaster released [REDACTED] in say December 2020 it would be reach fewer New Zealanders than if it were released in March of 2021.

All that aside - assumptions seem to be have made about my capacity to deliver within a couple of months of [REDACTED].

Rather than make assumptions about [REDACTED] why did a member of the assessment team not send me some production clarification questions?

If certainty of the broadcast is the issue then, by comparison, what certainty does NZ On Air have that TV THREE will even be an entity next year and that the projects NZ On Air is supporting on that platform will actually be broadcast?

You have also requested me to forward the following OIA Questions to Board Chairperson Ruth Harley for her response.

What were the objective measures the board used to decide [REDACTED] was not a priority over other proposals they decided to fund in the last round?

If no objective measures were used and the process was subjective, what attitudes and opinions were expressed by board members about my [REDACTED] proposal?

I am not requesting names of who said what, but given that board decision was unanimous then, in the interests of transparency, I should be given at least a summary of comments as to why my proposal was considered less of a priority than (as I understand it from the documents) the more expensive project the board DID choose to fund

Regarding assessment, as you know the general approaches we take are outlined on our website [here](#) and in the General Guidelines document [here](#). In the section “How we assess applications” we include a fuller explanation document [here](#) plus a downloadable ‘Exemplar’ Excel document underneath, indicating the types of questions considered by assessors as they consider the nine investment principles cited in our funding strategy [here](#).

Many issues are weighed up including both intended broadcast timing and audience size. Due to the volume of applications we are not always able to discuss every question we may have with every applicant: we generally rely on the documents submitted. We may contact the applicant prior to decision-making if the question is clearly material but any production logistics questions can usually addressed if and when a project is funded.

Regarding TV3 we have taken various steps to secure our interest in a small number of productions not yet completed and transmitted: we are not concerned that projects will not be released.

The Board Chair does not respond on behalf of the agency. The application was determined by the Board, not the Staff Investment Committee, as per the choice you were offered after you expressed concern that [REDACTED] was unsuccessful [REDACTED]. I can tell you that applications discussions are framed by the board paper (already provided to you), and that the individual discussions between members as they formulate a collective view are not recorded.

The Board decision not to fund the project was unanimous and there were many projects declined in this round.

Connecting and reflecting our nation

This is your third request for information concerning [REDACTED] alongside two further requests; one for information about other unsuccessful applications, and a privacy request. Each focuses on our processes: we have provided you with our internal documentation and referred you to the extensive information on our website.

As we noted in the funding letter dated 5 December:

Your application was considered by staff not previously involved in assessment of this application. As you requested, the recommendation was then fully considered by the NZ On Air Board. One board member left the room for the discussion and decision due to a conflict of interest.

Unfortunately we are unable to offer funding for [REDACTED]. Given the demands on our funding and the strength of other production applications in this round we could not give this project sufficient priority for support at this time.

You have the right to refer this response to the Ombudsman if you are dissatisfied with it. More information on how to do this is [here](#). NZ On Air proactively releases information in accordance with the Government's commitment to the Open Government Partnership National Action Plan. This includes publishing responses to requests for information under the OIA. Please note that this response (with your name removed) will be published on the NZ On Air website shortly and will remain on our website for 12 months.

Thank you for your interest in our work.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jane Wrightson', with a stylized, elongated horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jane Wrightson
CHIEF EXECUTIVE