



Conservation House
18-32 Manners Street
Te Aro
Wellington

29 April 2026

doc.govt.nz
Ref: OIAD-6227

Tēnā koe

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation, received on 02 April 2026, in which you asked for:

- *The date(s) on which your agency reduced or ceased its use of X (formerly Twitter), including any interim decisions (such as reducing posting frequency).*
- *The name(s) and role(s) of the person or persons who made the decision to reduce or cease use of X, and whether the decision was approved at a ministerial level.*
- *All analysis, advice, reports, or assessments that informed the decision to reduce or cease use of X, including any cost-benefit analysis, platform safety assessments, communications strategy advice, or legal advice.*
- *All documents that record whether political risk, including reputational risk associated with X's ownership, political associations of the platform, or public perception of the decision, was considered as part of the decision-making process.*
- *Any data or analysis comparing your agency's audience reach on X before the decision with your agency's audience reach on any replacement platform(s) after the decision, including follower counts, engagement metrics, or reach estimates.*
- *All communications between your agency and any Minister or ministerial office regarding the decision to reduce or cease use of X, including emails, letters, meeting notes, and briefings.*

We have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982.

In February 2025 a review was conducted by the Digital, Brand and Marketing Team of the Department's social media channels. The purpose of this review was to ensure that the appropriate resources were being invested towards the best range of digital channels to ensure the Department was accessible to the majority of New Zealanders on social media, while also prioritising target audiences in a rapidly changing digital environment. The growing number of New Zealanders using TikTok as a source of news and information was one of the primary drivers for this review.

As part of this review, a decision was made to transition away from X (formerly Twitter) as an active communication channel, but to retain it for emergency situations (e.g. visitor safety). This decision was made due to decreasing audience and engagement numbers on X.

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

1. *The date(s) on which your agency reduced or ceased its use of X (formerly Twitter), including any interim decisions (such as reducing posting frequency).*

Following a review of our digital channels in early 2025, the decision was made on 4 April 2025 to decrease our use of X and transition it to an emergency-only channel. This reflected declining audience engagement on the platform, and a strategic shift towards growing our TikTok presence.

2. *The name(s) and role(s) of the person or persons who made the decision to reduce or cease use of X, and whether the decision was approved at a ministerial level.*

The decision to decrease usage of X was an operational one and was not approved at a ministerial level. The recommendations from the Digital Channels Review were approved by the Digital, Brand and Marketing Manager. Fiona Weightman, Director Strategic Communication and Engagement and Sia Aston, Deputy Director-General Public Affairs were briefed on the review.

3. *All analysis, advice, reports, or assessments that informed the decision to reduce or cease use of X, including any cost-benefit analysis, platform safety assessments, communications strategy advice, or legal advice.*

A summary of the Digital Channels Review and the full review is included in the **Appendix** to this response.

I have decided to release the relevant parts of the documents listed below, with identifying information withheld where necessary under section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act 1982 to protect individual privacy.

4. *All documents that record whether political risk, including reputational risk associated with X's ownership, political associations of the platform, or public perception of the decision, was considered as part of the decision-making process.*

The Department did not consider political risk, including reputational risk associated with X's ownership, the political associations of the platform, or public perception of the decision, as part of the Digital Channels Review. Accordingly, no documents recording consideration of these matters exist, so this aspect of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act 1982.

5. *Any data or analysis comparing your agency's audience reach on X before the decision with your agency's audience reach on any replacement platform(s) after the decision, including follower counts, engagement metrics, or reach estimates.*

As a result of the Digital Channels Review, the Department focused on a new TikTok channel. Follower growth on TikTok has outpaced all other social media platforms and the Department's TikTok content has reached over 1.1 million people in the first six months. A table of follower counts, engagements, and reach for X and TikTok in 2025 is included in the **Appendix** to this response.

6. *All communications between your agency and any Minister or ministerial office regarding the decision to reduce or cease use of X, including emails, letters, meeting notes, and briefings.*

As previously stated, the decision to reduce or cease use of X was an operational decision made by the Department and did not require or receive ministerial approval. As a result, there were no communications between the Department and any Minister or ministerial office regarding this decision. The Department therefore does not hold any information of this nature, so this aspect of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act 1982 as the information requested does not exist.

You are entitled to seek an investigation and review of my decision by writing to an Ombudsman as provided by section 28(3) of the Official Information Act.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) and attached documents may be published on the Department's website.

Nāku noa, nā



Fiona Weightman
Director Strategic Communications and Engagement
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Appendix

Item	Date	Document description	Decision
1	21 March 2025	Digital Channels Review and Approach	Released in full
2	21 March 2025	Digital Channels Review - summary	Released in part

Table 1: Follower, reach and engagement metrics for X in 2025:

Date	Followers	Reach	Engagements
January 2025	19,268	7,032	388
February 2025	19,207	6,069	283
March 2025	19,129	1,265	33
April 2025	19,088	612	8
May 2025	18,966	654	20
June 2025	18,965	339	6
July 2025	18,951	519	10
August 2025	18,941	2,129	33
September 2025	18,913	431	16
October 2025	18,884	327	15
November 2025	18,825	309	3
December 2025	18,796	120	11

Table 2: Follower, reach and engagement metrics for TikTok in 2025:

Date	Followers	Reach	Engagements
January 2025	748	0	0
February 2025	893	0	0
March 2025	1,056	0	0
April 2025	1,119	0	0
May 2025	1,524	0	0
June 2025	1,781	0	0
July 2025	6,514	4,128,556	629,559
August 2025	8,721	2,043,103	228,155
September 2025	11,129	1,908,430	191,286
October 2025	14,135	687,421	25,055
November 2025	15,527	555,590	11,927
December 2025	16,657	659,775	22,857