



11 February 2026

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## Te Whatu Ora threatening nurse requesting copy of her HR file

Good morning,

1. We write regarding a threatening message sent to one of our members, Catherine Simpson following her request for a copy of her HR file.
2. Ms Simpson is a nurse employed by Te Whatu Ora. She is currently defending charges brought against her by the Nursing Council's Professional Conduct Committee for expressing her personal views online. In the decades Ms Simpson has been practising as a nurse, she has not been the subject of a complaint or disciplinary procedure. Notwithstanding, she requested a copy of her HR file from Te Whatu Ora on 4 December 2025.
3. On 22 January 2026, Ms Simpson spoke to Wen Zhang, a Senior HR Advisor for Te Whatu Ora on the telephone regarding her request. Ms Zhang informed her that they cannot release a copy of her HR file. Rather, Ms Simpson could view the file and request copies of certain documents, but not all as some documents cannot be copied.
4. Ms Simpson emailed Ms Zhang on 27 January 2026 asking various follow up questions regarding access to the file, including the location of the HR offices and a proposed meeting date. Ms Zhang has not responded to this email but instead, Ms Simpson received the **attached** anonymous card (stamped 3 February 2026) posted to her private residence which reads as follows:

*"Cath, HR are asking some very specific questions about you. What the fuck are you up to? For everyone's sake, please stop immediately!"*

5. First, the Privacy Act 2020 grants individuals access to their personal information held by agencies, including employers like Te Whatu Ora. Agencies must provide access in the requested form but can offer inspection only if justified under section 56. Arbitrary restriction to viewing is not permitted without explanation.
6. Second, and more importantly, the receipt by Ms Simpson at her private home of an anonymous, threatening message, received in apparent connection with a lawful request to her employer, has caused Ms Simpson significant distress and anxiety. The menacing tone of the card strongly suggests that information about Ms Simpson's HR file request, and possibly internal HR discussions about her, has been disclosed to an unidentified third party at Te Whatu Ora, who has then sought to intimidate her into abandoning that request.
7. If that inference is correct, it raises serious questions about the handling of Ms Simpson's personal information and Te Whatu Ora's compliance with its privacy, confidentiality, and information-security obligations. Independently of that, the apparent attempt to deter an employee from exercising a lawful right to access her own information is wholly inappropriate and a breach of her rights.
8. As Ms Simpson's employer, Te Whatu Ora owes her a duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 and its obligations as a good faith employer under the Employment Relations Act 2000. That duty extends to protecting employees from harm, including psychological harm arising from intimidation and harassment connected to their employment. The failure to safeguard Ms Simpson's confidentiality is a failure of that duty.
9. Beyond the immediate distress to Ms Simpson, this incident sends a deeply troubling message to any Te Whatu Ora employee who might consider exercising their lawful rights: that doing so may attract retaliation. Te Whatu Ora has a responsibility not only to remedy the harm done to Ms Simpson but to demonstrate that this conduct will not be tolerated.
10. We also expect Te Whatu Ora to take immediate steps to attend to Ms Simpson's wellbeing in light of this incident, including offering access to appropriate support services and ensuring that no further adverse consequences follow from her having made this request.
11. In light of the above, we seek Te Whatu Ora's urgent response and the following actions:
  - a. Immediate provision to Ms Simpson of a complete copy of her HR file, in electronic form, without further restriction or delay.
  - b. An independent investigation into:
    - how Ms Simpson's HR file request was handled;
    - who had access to information about that request;
    - who at Te Whatu Ora has access to Ms Simpson's private residence address;

- how information about internal HR discussions concerning Ms Simpson came to be known by the sender of the anonymous card; and
  - whether any Te Whatu Ora employee was involved, directly or indirectly, in the disclosure or intimidation.
- c. A formal written apology to Ms Simpson, together with an acknowledgement of the seriousness of this incident and the distress caused.

12. Considering the seriousness of the matters raised above, we seek Te Whatu Ora's urgent response addressing these concerns.

Yours faithfully,

**Free Speech Union (New Zealand) Inc.**



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**Cath,**

**HR are asking some very  
specific questions about you.**

**What the fuck are you up to?**

**For everyone's sake, please  
stop immediately!**

**Cath Simpson**

3 FEB

