

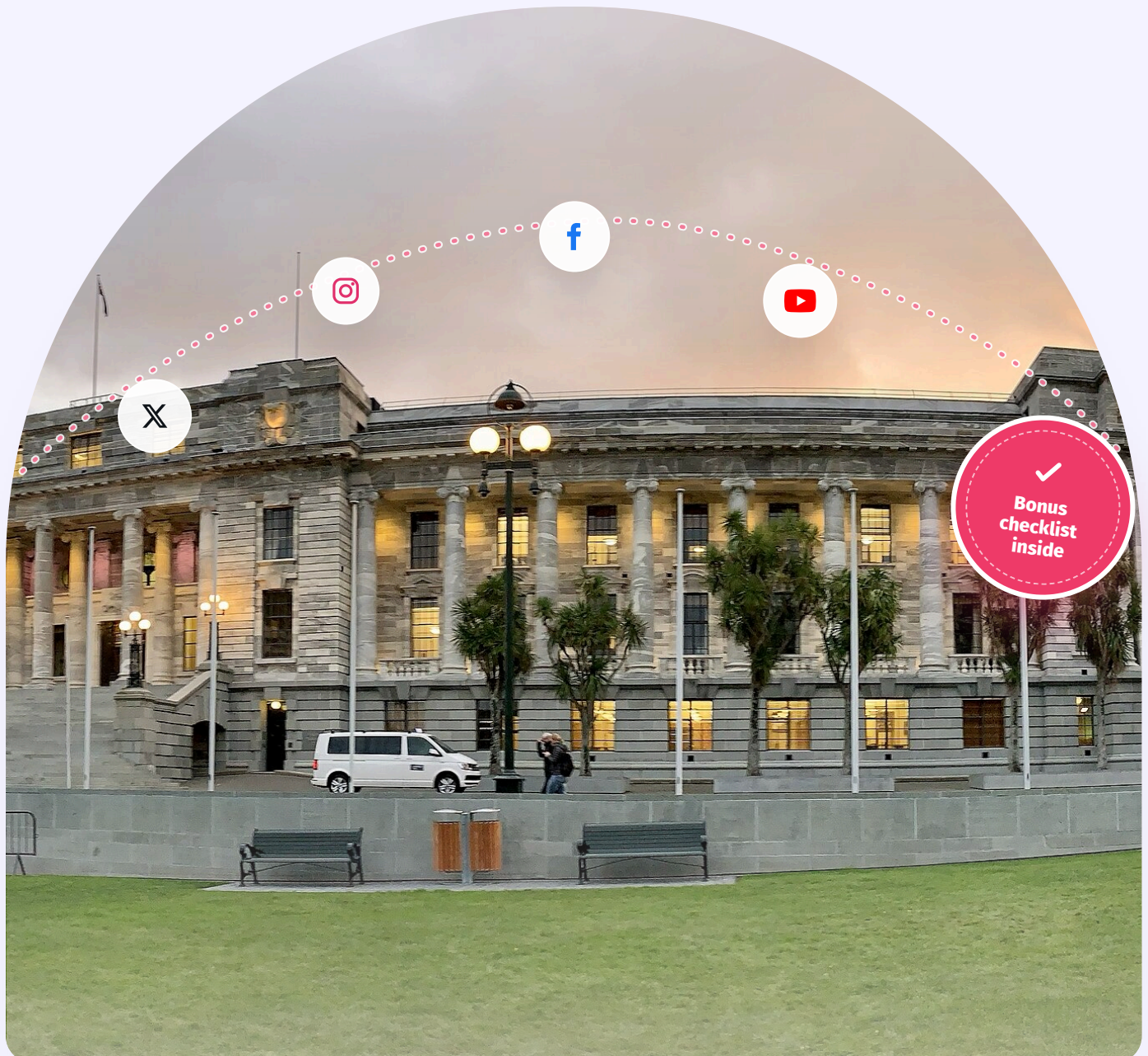
— PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 2005 (NZ)

New Zealand

Archiving Social Media: A Guide For NZ Government

 NZ LAW ACCESS LAW RETENTION & DISPOSAL CHECKLIST ARCHIVE-READY

Everything your council or agency needs to know about social media recordkeeping: the records Act, the access regime, retention and disposal, and a ready-to-use readiness checklist.



SOCIAL MEDIA ARCHIVING FOR NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT

New Zealand social media records, ready for **OIA** and **LGOIMA** requests.

Ready to find it, review it and export it. Posts, comments, replies, edits, deletions and associated media on official accounts can be government records when they evidence official business — and when an OIA or LGOIMA request arrives, the response duty is statutory. The statutory period governs the decision and notice; locating the complete record set is the operational work needed to make that decision defensibly.

Central government agencies — Official Information Act 1982. Under the OIA, central government must decide the request and give notice of the decision as soon as reasonably practicable and no later than 20 OIA working days after the day of receipt (s 15), with a reasonable extension available for large or consultation-heavy requests (s 15A). Information approved for release must then be made available without undue delay.

Local authorities — Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987. Under LGOIMA, local authorities must decide the request and give notice of the decision as soon as reasonably practicable and no later than 20 LGOIMA working days after the day of receipt (s 13), with the parallel extension in s 14. LGOIMA has its own working-day calendar: it excludes the relevant provincial anniversary day and runs its summer exclusion from 20 December to 10 January. Information approved for release must be made available without undue delay.

THE LEGAL CONTEXT

Social media records carry legal obligations. **A reliable archive helps your team meet them.**

Public Records Act 2005 (NZ). Public offices and local authorities must create and maintain full and accurate records of their affairs in accordance with normal, prudent business practice, and may only dispose of them with the authority of the Chief Archivist. Archives New Zealand sets the Information and Records Management Standard they must follow.

Retention in New Zealand. Public offices must use the general disposal authorities for common, non-core information. Local authorities may use them as best-practice guidance, subject to the statutory disposal process for protected local authority records. Core business records may require a specific or sector-based authority. Confirm the class with Archives New Zealand or your records team.

Primary sources

- **Public Records Act 2005 (NZ)**
- **Official Information Act 1982 (NZ)**
- **Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (NZ)**
- **Archives New Zealand — text messages and other communications**
- **Office of the Ombudsman — official information calculators**
- **Office of the Ombudsman — LGOIMA guide for local government agencies**
- **Archives NZ — list of protected records for local authorities (notes)**

Reviewed against current official sources: 30 August 2026 • General information, not legal advice.

The NZ framework

Four things shape the social media record in New Zealand: the records Act, the access regime, retention and disposal, and the consequences of getting disposal wrong.

RECORDS ACT

Public Records Act 2005 (NZ)

Public Records Act 2005 No 40

Archives New Zealand guidance says that when an organisation uses social media or similar communication tools to conduct business, those communications are considered records under the Public Records Act 2005.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Official Information Act 1982 (NZ)

Official Information Act 1982 No 156

Central government decides requests under the OIA; councils and other local authorities answer under the separate LGOIMA. Under both Acts, the agency must decide the request and give notice of that decision as soon as reasonably practicable and no later than 20 working days after the day the request is received, with a reasonable extension available for large or consultation-heavy requests. Information the agency decides to release must then be made available without undue delay — undue delay is treated as a refusal. The two Acts count working days differently: LGOIMA excludes the relevant provincial anniversary day and runs its summer exclusion from 20 December to 10 January, while the OIA's runs from 25 December to 15 January. The Office of the Ombudsman investigates complaints under both Acts.

RETENTION & DISPOSAL

General disposal authorities issued by Archives New Zealand

Retention and disposal authorities

Public offices must use the general disposal authorities for common, non-core information. Local authorities may use them as best-practice guidance, subject to the statutory disposal process for protected local authority records. Core business records may require a specific or sector-based authority.

CONSEQUENCES

Wilful or negligent mishandling of public records is an offence

Public Records Act 2005 (NZ) ss 61–62

Sections 61–62 of the Public Records Act 2005 create offences for wilfully or negligently damaging a public record, unlawfully disposing of or destroying one, or otherwise contravening the Act — maximum fines of NZ\$5,000 for an individual and NZ\$10,000 otherwise. The consequence attaches to public and protected records and the authorised disposal process — it does not make every council post permanent. The Ombudsman separately investigates delay complaints under the OIA and LGOIMA, including undue delay in releasing information.

If it was posted, commented on, edited or deleted on an official channel — it can be a government record when it evidences official business.

Who oversees the record

The authorities that set the recordkeeping standards, publish the social media guidance and review how requests are handled in New Zealand.

RECORDS AUTHORITY

Archives New Zealand (Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga)

[Text messages and other communications guidance](#)

Sets the recordkeeping standards and publishes the guidance that applies to official social media in New Zealand. Your retention and disposal decisions are made under its authorities.

OVERSIGHT

Office of the Ombudsman (Tari o te Kaitiaki Mana Tangata)

www.ombudsman.parliament.nz

Reviews how official information requests are handled under both the OIA and LGOIMA, including complaints about delay or refusal — which makes a findable, exportable record the easiest way to keep a request routine.

WHO IS COVERED

Central government (OIA) • Local authorities (LGOIMA)

Central government answers under the OIA; councils and other local authorities answer under the separate LGOIMA — the two Acts do not share a working-day calendar.

OMBUDSMAN GUIDANCE

The two-stage rule under LGOIMA

[Office of the Ombudsman — LGOIMA guide for local government agencies](#)

The Ombudsman's LGOIMA guide for local government confirms the two-stage rule: decide and communicate the decision within 20 working days, then make information approved for release available without undue delay — undue delay is itself treated as a refusal. This is authoritative Ombudsman guidance, not case law.

Without a complete archive, **responding with confidence** to a request, audit or inquiry gets harder every day.

— READY TO GET STARTED

Social Media Records **Readiness Checklist.**

A social media archive is a critical part of your recordkeeping strategy — one shared source of truth for your records, legal, IT and communications teams.

**Get the right people involved.**

Bring together records, communications, legal, governance and IT.

**Understand what laws apply.**

Know your records Act, access regime and retention authorities.

**Know your formats.**

Preserve original content, context, metadata, links and attachments.

**Think about privacy.**

Protect personal information and control access appropriately.

**Know which accounts are in scope.**

Identify every account used to conduct official business.

**Define what needs to be captured.**

Include posts, comments, replies, edits, deletions and media.

**Set your retention rules.**

Sentence records under your retention and disposal authority.

**Capture edits and deletions.**

Preserve content even after it changes or disappears.

**Plan for information requests.**

Make records easy to search, retrieve and export.

**Protect record integrity.**

Maintain authentic, complete and defensible records.

**Control access to your archive.**

Set clear permissions and maintain an audit trail.

**Test your process regularly.**

Make sure you can find and export records when needed.

Captured. Searchable. Defensible.

Ready to see how Brolly supports the capture, search, integrity and export steps on this list? Turn the page.

Keep the social record ready before the request arrives.

Social content can change or disappear long before an information request is received. Brolly gives authorised teams a searchable archive of supported content from connected official accounts, preserving available context so records can be found, reviewed and exported when needed.



"If the Chief Archivist asks me are we compliant, I can say with certainty, 'Yes, we are compliant.'"

Taranaki Regional Council — Brolly customer since 2018

[Read the Taranaki Regional Council story →](#)

GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS THAT USE BROLLY



Taranaki
Regional Council



Te Kaunihera o Te Tairāwhiti
GISBORNE
DISTRICT COUNCIL



Clutha
District Council

- ✓ Capture supported posts, comments, edits & deletions automatically
- ✓ Search and export response-ready record sets with metadata intact
- ✓ Nothing disposed of without your instruction

[Book a free demo →](#)

[The NZ law guide](#)

Captured. Searchable. Defensible.