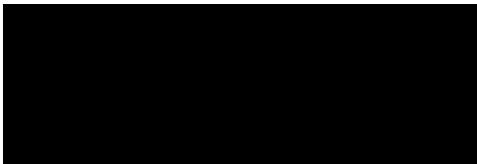



22 October 2025



Kia ora 

Official Information Act request 25.068

Thank you for your request of 2 October 2025 for the following information:

"I would like to request a list of all complaints made to ComCom regarding misleading and or inaccurate product descriptions on ecommerce websites operating in New Zealand across the years 2020-2025.

The nature of complaints could include:

- 1. Allegations that the trading company has repressed a negative review*
 - 2. Inauthentically or "fake" reviews, positive, negative, or neutral*
- + any related allegations that may sway a shopper for or against buying a particular product in an unfair manner."*

On 15 October 2025, you clarified your request to the following:

"...alleged claims of misleading reviews because of instances such as repressing reviews or fake reviews."

Our response

Before responding to your request in detail, it is important to clarify that the Commission now reports on overall 'concerns received'. This is because the wide range of information we receive from the public may include, but is not limited to, complaints.

Between 1 January 2020 and 15 October 2025, the Commission received 246 concerns about reviews and endorsements. The table overleaf shows the numbers of concerns broken down by year:

Year	Number of reported concerns about reviews/endorsements
2020	28
2021	25
2022	37
2023	59
2024	50
2025 (up to 15 October)	47
Total	246

Please note, concern data about a company on its own does not reflect compliance with the law. The fact that we have received concerns does not necessarily mean that a company has done anything wrong, or that any harm has been caused to the consumer or competitor.

Issues with reviews and endorsements can include a wide range of things, including the allegations of:

- fake positive reviews or endorsements
- fake negative reviews by competitors
- manipulating reviews (including incentives for positive reviews, negative consequences for negative reviews, hiding/deleting negative reviews)
- false claims of affiliation/accreditation.

We are refusing the aspect of your request asking for reviews exclusive to 'ecommerce websites' under section 18(f) of the OIA, for reasons of substantial collusion and research. This is because we do not collate data on ecommerce websites specifically, and providing it would require us to manually search each individual concern and its associated material, noting that even then the information available may not be sufficient to answer your question.

Further information

We hope this response has been helpful.

If you have any questions about this response, please do not hesitate to contact us at oia@comcom.govt.nz.

If you are unhappy with our response, you have the right to complain to the Ombudsman. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Finally, confirming the Commission may publish this response on our website as part of our proactive release process. All personal information will be redacted prior to publication.

Ngā mihi nui



Adam McFerran
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