

17 July 2019

Deena Coster  
Reporter/Ripoata  
Taranaki Daily News  
[deena.coster@stuff.co.nz](mailto:deena.coster@stuff.co.nz)

REF: OIA-5345

Dear Deena

**Request made under the Official Information Act 1982**

Thank you for your email of 19 June 2019 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

1. *How much money has NZTA paid from September 2017 to date on its public roadshow and engagement sessions in the community about the roading project?*
2. *Can you tell me how many people are currently employed by NZTA to work on this specific roading project?*
3. *How many hours of NZTA officials time has been spent meeting with Tony and Debbie Pascoe?*
4. *Is NZTA aware of the concerns the Pascoes have raised about their perceived treatment by the agency? Have any complaints been laid with NZTA by the Pascoes about their treatment?*
5. *Can NZTA confirm the receipt of a \$70,000 invoice tabled by the Pascoes as a means to seek compensation for the time they have spent attending meetings and the like in connection with the project?*
6. *If the Environment Court rules in the appellants' favour, has NZTA indicated any interim position on whether it will appeal?*

Your questions have been set out and addressed below.

1. *How much money has NZTA paid from September 2017 to date on its public roadshow and engagement sessions in the community about the roading project?*

From September 2017 to date the NZ Transport Agency has spent approximately \$17,000 on its public roadshow and community engagement sessions about the Mt Messenger Bypass Project. This figure includes payments for venue and equipment hire, catering, and travel and accommodation for staff. It does not include salaries of staff involved.

2. *Can you tell me how many people are currently employed by NZTA to work on this specific roading project?*

Currently the Transport Agency employs 2.6 full time equivalents who are dedicated to the Mt Messenger Bypass Project.

There are a large number of staff employed in non-project specific roles within the Transport Agency, who also provide support for this project. They have not been included in this number.

3. *How many hours of NZTA officials time has been spent meeting with Tony and Debbie Pascoe?*

This matter is subject to the current Environment Court appeal process and will be a matter of public record following this. I am therefore refusing this part of your request under section 18(d) of the Act; as the information requested is or will soon be publicly available.

However, on the public record, in his evidence at the 2018 council hearing on the project's resource management applications, Project Manager Robert Napier stated he had been "in active discussions with the Pascoes about the Project since April 2016". This included visiting the Pascoes at their home approximately 20 times.

*Is NZTA aware of the concerns the Pascoes have raised about their perceived treatment by the agency? Have any complaints been laid with NZTA by the Pascoes about their treatment?*

We are aware that the Pascoes have raised concerns regarding their experience of the Transport Agency's engagement with them regarding the Project. Those matters are subject to the current Environment Court appeal process and will be a matter of public record following this. I am therefore refusing this part of your request under section 18(d) of the Act; as the information requested is or will soon be publicly available.

4. *Can NZTA confirm the receipt of a \$70,000 invoice tabled by the Pascoes as a means to seek compensation for the time they have spent attending meetings and the like in connection with the project?*

I am refusing this part of your request under section 9(2)(j) of the Act; to enable a Minister of the Crown or any department or organisation holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations)

5. *If the Environment Court rules in the appellants' favour, has NZTA indicated any interim position on whether it will appeal?*

No, the Transport Agency has not indicated any interim position on whether or not it would appeal such a decision. The Transport Agency is focussed on the current Environment Court proceedings. It would not be appropriate for us to speculate as to the outcome of those proceedings.

Regarding the information that has been withheld, I do not consider that it is in the public interest to make this information available.

Under section 28 of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision to withhold information. You can find the contact details for the Ombudsman at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz)

If you would like to discuss this reply with the Transport Agency, please contact Sarah-Lee Crellin, Central North Island Media Manager, by email to [sarah-lee.crellin@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:sarah-lee.crellin@nzta.govt.nz) or by phone on (07) 958 7954.

Yours sincerely



**Andrew Thackwray**  
Senior Manager, Project Delivery