

10 August 2022

Anusha Bradley
Investigative Journalist
Radio New Zealand
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REF: OIA-10264

Dear Anusha

Request made under the Official Information Act 1982

Thank you for your email of 7 June 2022 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

I would like to request the following information from your organisation, for each financial year: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and for the partial year of 2022 to date:

- 1. Number of FTE communications/media staff employed in each year (this includes all internal and external communications staff/content producers and social media staff)*
- 2. The salary range paid to communications staff in each year.*
- 3. Number of communications/media contractors used in each year.*
- 4. Total sum paid to communications contractors in each year*
- 5. A breakdown of positions and numbers employed in each role (ie how many media advisors, senior media advisors, internal communications, managers, social media producers/managers)*
- 6. How many media queries received in each year*
- 7. How many interview requests received in each year*
- 8. How many media interviews given, and to which media organisations and when.*
- 9. Total salary costs for communications staff each year*
- 10. In each year, how many communications staff paid a salary more than \$100,000 per annum and \$200,000 per annum*

On 5 July 2022, Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency wrote to you to extend the timeframe for responding to your request, and subsequently wrote to you again on 26 July to confirm that the information would be released to you by 10 August 2022. This letter provides a final response to your request.

The response to each of your questions can be found below:

1. Number of FTE communications/media staff employed in each year (this includes all internal and external communications staff/content producers and social media staff)

For the 2021/22 financial year, a breakdown of FTE staff is included in Attachment 1.

This information is publicly available for the years 2017 to 2021 through our reporting to the Transport and Infrastructure Select Committee.

This information can be found in response to Question 52, on page 81 of the document at the following link:

https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/53SCTI_EVI_116640_TI2301/8086071905b0413a0c7a58c7a61ecde9c2abe829

I am therefore required to refuse this part of your request under Section 18(d) of the Act, as the information is publicly available.

2. The salary range paid to communications staff in each year.

For the 2021/22 financial year, a breakdown of salary band ranges is included in Attachment 1.

For prior years, this information can be found in response to Question 52 within the document at the following link:

https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/53SCTI_EVI_116640_TI2301/8086071905b0413a0c7a58c7a61ecde9c2abe829

I am therefore required to refuse this part of your request under Section 18(d) of the Act, as the information is publicly available.

3. Number of communications/media contractors used in each year.

This information is reported to Select Committee as part of our Annual Review and year-end financial reporting, which is not yet available for the 2021/22 financial year.

For prior years, this information can be found in response to Question 52 within the document at the following link:

https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/53SCTI_EVI_116640_TI2301/8086071905b0413a0c7a58c7a61ecde9c2abe829

I am therefore required to refuse this part of your request under Section 18(d) of the Act, as the information is publicly available.

4. Total sum paid to communications contractors in each year.

The amount paid to communications contractors in the 2020/21 financial year was \$831,164. Figures for the 2021/22 financial year are not yet available.

Spending on contractors for previous financial years is available through our reporting to Select Committee, which I have linked to below. Question 72 on page 105 of the document linked below provides the figures you are seeking, with prior years linked within the document:

https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/53SCTI_EVI_116640_TI2301/8086071905b0413a0c7a58c7a61ecde9c2abe829

I am therefore refusing this part of your request, for information from 2017 to 2020, under Section 18(d) of the Act, as the information is publicly available.

5. A breakdown of positions and numbers employed in each role (ie how many media advisors, senior media advisors, internal communications, managers, social media producers/managers)

A breakdown of titles by FTE count is released to you in Attachment 2.

6. How many media queries received in each year

7. How many interview requests received in each year

8. How many media interviews given, and to which media organisations and when.

I am refusing questions six, seven, and eight of your request under section 18(f) of the Act because the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research. We have considered consulting with you, as required by section 18B of the Act. However, answering these three questions would require manually trawling through six years' worth of many thousands of emails, which would require hundreds of hours of work, and even then, it wouldn't capture many verbal conversations between media managers and media outlets.

We have also considered whether charging or extending the timeframe for responding to your request would help, as required by section 18A of the Act. However, following extension of the timeframe we have been unable to come to a resolution which would enable us to satisfy this part of your request and neither a charge nor a further extension of time would have resolved the matter.

9. Total salary costs for communications staff each year

A breakdown of staff remuneration for the 2021/22 financial year can be found in Attachment 1, under the table *2022 Comms Data*.

This information is publicly available for the years 2017 to 2021 through our reporting to the Transport and Infrastructure Select Committee. This information can be found in response to Question 52, on page 83 of the document at the following link:

https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/53SCTI_EVI_116640_TI2301/8086071905b0413a0c7a58c7a61ecde9c2abe829

I am therefore required to refuse this part of your request under Section 18(d) of the Act, as the information is publicly available.

10. In each year, how many communications staff paid a salary more than \$100,000 per annum and \$200,000 per annum

A breakdown of staff remuneration for the 2021/22 financial year can be found in Attachment 1, under the table *2022 Comms Data*.

For the years 2017 to 2021, this information is publicly available through our reporting to the Transport and Infrastructure Select Committee. The information can be found in response to Question 52, on page 83 of the document at the following link:

[https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-](https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/53SCTI_EVI_116640_TI2301/8086071905b0413a0c7a58c7a61ecde9c2abe829)

[NZ/53SCTI_EVI_116640_TI2301/8086071905b0413a0c7a58c7a61ecde9c2abe829](https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/53SCTI_EVI_116640_TI2301/8086071905b0413a0c7a58c7a61ecde9c2abe829)

I am therefore required to refuse this part of your request under Section 18(d) of the Act, as the information is publicly available.

In responding to your request, Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency has used Public Service Commission (PSC) guidance relating to the categorisation of communications staff and which roles should be counted as communications roles. This guidance has been applied to the 2021/22 year, which is why there is a decline in reported staffing levels in the most recent financial year.

The new coding guidance outlines that non-communications staff who mainly engage directly with communities (e.g., consulting on proposed changes or helping people understand their obligations or entitlements) should not be reported against communications staff codes. This applies to Waka Kotahi engagement staff who undertake community and other engagement as part of the legislative and other requirements for the delivery of large infrastructure projects.

In previous years, a different methodology was used to calculate communications staff numbers and associated data. Waka Kotahi has since adopted the approach used by the recently issued PSC guidance. Given the time that has elapsed and our move to a new, modern system for recording employee information, Waka Kotahi cannot accurately reproduce the data for prior years, so we have referred you to our Select Committee reporting where relevant.

In line with Waka Kotahi policy, this response will soon be published on our website.

If you would like to discuss this reply with Waka Kotahi, please contact Ministerial Services, by email to official.correspondence@nzta.govt.nz

Under section 28 of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision to partially refuse this request. The contact details for the Ombudsman can be located at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Yours sincerely



Karen Jones

General Manager, Engagement and Partnerships