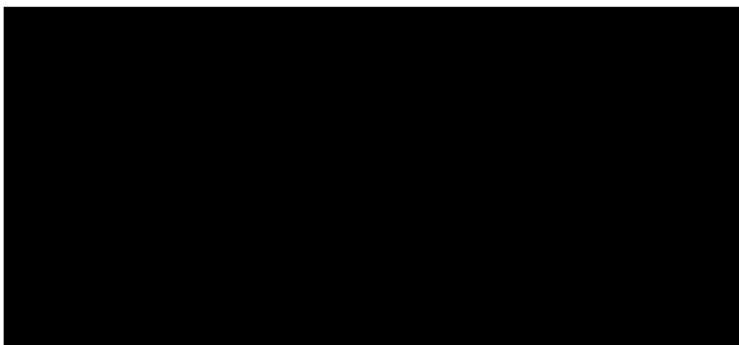


10 OCT 2019

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Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request for information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) on 24 July 2019, for:

- *"How many comms / PR staff did you employ (FTE) for the years ending June 30 2014 and 2019?"*
- *How many comms / PR people did you employ (FTE) on contract for the years ending June 30 2014 and 2019?"*
- *How much was your comms/PR budget for the years ending June 30 2014 and 2019?"*
- *What proportion of the comms/PR budget was spent on outside comms/PR consultants or contractors?"*
- *How many media enquiries did you receive for the years ending June 2014 and 2019?"*
- *What is your target turnaround time for media enquiries?"*
- *How often did you meet the target response time last year?"*
- *What proportion of time did your comms/PR team spend on responding to media enquiries last year?"*
- *How many live (in person or by phone) media interviews did your chief do last year?"*
- *If you have a policy or guidelines on how comms/PR staff should respond to media enquiries, please provide a copy.*
- *How many of your current comms/PR employees are former journalists?"*
- *What is the range of salaries paid to your comms/PR staff from lowest to highest?"*

For the sake of clarity, I will address each of your questions below in turn.

- *"How many comms / PR staff did you employ (FTE) for the years ending June 30 2014 and 2019?"*

Information regarding the number of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff employed in public relations and communications is reported in the Ministry's annual reviews by Parliament. The most recent available Annual Review, containing the 2013/14 information is publicly available on Parliament's website:

www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/52SCHE_EVI_80830_5069/f058e755fe1cbf58cec0b8208c7e6a207accb41c.

As at 30 June 2019, the Ministry employed 14 (13.8 FTE) communication staff, with a total FTE salary of \$1,514,804.00.

- *How many comms / PR people did you employ (FTE) on contract for the years ending June 30 2014 and 2019?*

Some information regarding staff on contract is reported in the Ministry's responses to annual review questions. Please refer to the 2013/14 Annual Review, particularly the responses to questions 16 and 22, available on Parliament's website:

https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/51SCHE_EVI_00DBSCH_OTH_59367_1_A425729/e8ff000021d0c42f1e17eaa65707edfbf719674c.

Three individuals were contracted during the financial year ending 30 June 2019 within the Ministry's Communications group.

- *How much was your comms/PR budget for the years ending June 30 2014 and 2019?*
- *What proportion of the comms/PR budget was spent on outside comms/PR consultants or contractors?*

Please find below a table which shows the Ministry's communications budget and the expenditure on external resources as a percentage of this budget, as at 30 June 2014 and 2019.

Financial year	2013-2014	2018-2019
External Resource Actual Spend (\$)	128,449	34,100
Total Communications Group Budget (\$)	1,782,041	2,23,959
External resource spend at a % of TOTAL BUDGET	7%	2%

- *How many media enquiries did you receive for the years ending June 2014 and 2019?*

The Ministry receives an estimated 2,000 media queries each year, and this number changes little from year to year. The Ministry does not specifically report on the number of media queries received. As such, your request for the exact number is refused under section 18(g) of the Act as the information is not held by the Ministry or any other agency.

- *What is your target turnaround time for media enquiries?*

All media queries are acknowledged within two hours and replied to within deadline if possible. The Ministry recognises that the news media have a legitimate interest in the Ministry of Health and its activities. The Ministry's approach is to be open and helpful to the media and to recognise that they are an important means of communication with the general public.

- *How often did you meet the target response time last year?*

The Ministry does not directly measure and report on this, however reporters generally receive responses either the same day or the next day. Your request for the exact rate of response timeliness is refused under section 18(g) of the Act as the information is not held by the Ministry or any other agency.

- *What proportion of time did your comms/PR team spend on responding to media enquiries last year?*

The Ministry's media team spends an estimated 80 to 90 per cent of their time responding to media queries or liaising with media.

- *How many live (in person or by phone) media interviews did your chief do last year?*

The Ministry is, on average, interviewed by the media once per week. Spokespeople include senior staff and the Ministry's Director-General. The Ministry recognises that its senior staff have a responsibility to be responsive to public interest in health topics.

The Ministry does not specifically report on the number of interviews carried out by the Director-General. As such, this part of your request is refused under section 18(g) of the Act as the information is not held by the Ministry or any other agency.

- *If you have a policy or guidelines on how comms/PR staff should respond to media enquiries, please provide a copy.*

A copy of the Ministry's media guidelines for staff is attached for your reference as Appendix One.

- *How many of your current comms/PR employees are former journalists?*

All current staff in the media team are former reporters. The Ministry recognises that dealing appropriately with the media requires sensitivity, skill, and an understanding of the pressure journalists themselves may be under.

- *What is the range of salaries paid to your comms/PR staff from lowest to highest?"*

Information regarding staff salaries is published as part of the Ministry's annual review by Parliament. The Ministry's 2017/2018 Annual Review is publicly available on Parliament's website here: www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/52SCHE_EVI_80830_5069/f058e755fe1cbf58cec0b8208c7e6a207accb41c. The distribution of staff salaries is shown on page 40.

I trust that this information fulfils your request. Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry of Health website (if applicable).

Under section 28(3) of the Act you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Turner
Deputy Director-General
Office of the Director-General

Appendix One: Media Rules and Guidelines

The news media have a legitimate interest in the Ministry of Health and its activities. The Ministry's approach is to be open and helpful to the media and to recognise that they are an important means of communication with the general public.

Dealing appropriately with the media requires sensitivity and skill.

Business Rules:

- All media enquiries are to be referred to Communications immediately.
- All media calls are to be acknowledged or responded to within 30 minutes by Communications.
- All Ministry spokespeople are to be media trained.
- Only designated Ministry spokespeople comment on behalf of the Ministry. This includes commenting on behalf of the Ministry on social media platforms.
- Interviews are given only by authorised Ministry spokespeople. Any staff member may be asked to brief a spokesperson on an issue prior to interview.
- All statements given to media are to be attributed to the appropriate spokesperson, who is responsible for approving written statements.
- Any complaints about the media are to be co-ordinated by Communications.
- No home numbers or mobile phone numbers are to be given to the media except mobile phone numbers of Communications staff.
- The Ministry's media team members are not designated spokespeople. This is for their protection and to ensure trained spokespeople are aware of issues in their areas of expertise.
- A summary of all media requests and responses is circulated to the Director-General, ELT and media spokespeople at the end of each day.

Guidelines:

Spokespeople are expected to:

- know enough to give the media the full picture
- be fully accountable for the Government's policy approach
- be accountable for proper handling of media inquiries
- consider who else should be made aware of media comment (sector colleagues, Ministry staff etc)

Contact the media team in Communications if you get a media query, need help with a communications strategy, or to have a media release written. They are also there to help with Oped (opinion editorial) pieces, Letters to the Editor or corrections