

Corporate : Communications  
Proactive release: 11 September 2019



26 August 2019

[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]

E-mail: [Redacted]

Dear [Redacted]

#### **Official Information Act (1982) Request**

I write in response to your Official Information Act request, dated 30 July 2019. You requested the following information, and our responses are below:

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

For context, we note that Counties Manukau District Health Board (CMDHB) provides health and support services to the communities of Counties Manukau, a population in excess of 569,400 people. While the community we serve is vibrant and diverse, it also has high health care needs and is socio-economically challenged. Counties Manukau Health employs more than 7,500 staff, and our community providers also have a significant workforce.

Our Communications Team provides both internal and external communication functions for our health workforce, our patients, communities and stakeholders, as well as for media. This includes development

of communication campaigns to disseminate key messages, providing public health and emergency information, and proactive release of organisational information. This team also manages Official Information Act requests and Digital / social media channels and Design functions.

**1. How many communicaitons / PR staff did you employ (FTE) for the years ending June 30 2014, and 2019?**

	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
Communications / Public Relations staff employed (FTE) for the years ending June 30 2014 and 2019?	6	6	9	11	9.5	7.7

**Table 1**

- NOTE These tables include internal, external stakeholder and media communications staff.
- They exclude the Digital Channels and Design teams and the Official Information Act Specialist (0.75FTE)

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

	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
Communications / Public Relations staff employed (Headcount) on contract for the years ending June 30 2014 and 2019?	-	4	4	4	4	3#

**Table 2**

- #NOTE The 2018/19 numbers reflect headcount for short-term contractors for specific project and campaign work (i.e. Acute Mental Health Unit, Workforce, and Quality Account publication), as well as contact cover for vacancy.
- None of the contractors in 2018/19 were for the full year.

**3. How much was your communications/ PR budget for the years ending June 30 2014 and 2019?**

	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
Communications / Public Relations budget for the years ending June 30 2014 and 2019?	800,474	792,369	795,789	1,272,182	1,218,014	1,596,756

**Table 3**

- These amounts reflect the **total service budget**, including staffing costs (including for digital and design staff, contractors), and the costs for administration, campaigns and advertising as well as licensing of IT and web systems.

**4. What proportion of the communications/ PR budget was spent on outside communications/ PR consultants or contractors?**

	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
Proportion of the Communications / Public Relations budget was spent on consultants/ contractors?	-	38%	54%	12%	1%	1%

**Table 4**

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

	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
Media enquiries did you receive for the years ending June 2014 & 2019?	Not previously recorded					619
Tracked/ published Media releases provided	7	6	13	5	58	80
OIA response to media requests ( <i>not</i> the total # of OIA requests processed)	Not previously recorded			50	130	118

**Table 5**

- Media enquires range from simple patient status updates to multiple requests spanning a number of weeks
- Media enquires total above does not include any Official Information Act requests submitted directly to OIA co-ordinator– see separate tally

**6. What is your target turnaround time for media enquiries?**

All media responses are responded to as quickly as possible, within the context of our organisation.

This turnaround time will vary depending on the complexity of inquiry. For example, a patient status update can be provided almost immediately, but a series questions that involve input from a service subject matter expert may take longer, particularly for our specialist clinical staff, according to their availability.

We also take into consideration the deadlines provided by the journalists, but there are times when the Communications team will negotiate a longer deadline to provide a full response.

There are also occasions when the inquiry/ request is for information that is complex, requires us to consider the implications of public release, or retrieve and collate material. We can refer these to the Official Information Act process for completion. We will discuss this with the journalist first, in case they prefer to amend their questions, and still respond as soon as practicable to the request.

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

As above question 6, this is not applicable as we do not have a set target.

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

It is not possible to give a precise percentage of time involved, but it is considerable. Of our wider Communications Team, there are 1.7 FTE who work predominantly in the external media space, including providing proactive releases, facilitating media access, and responding to queries.

Many media inquiries are submitted directly through the OIA process, which involves a significant proportion (more than 60%) of these requests, and time of the 0.75 FTE OIA Specialist role.

**9. How many live (in person, or by phone) media interviews did your Chief Executive do last year?**

We do not collate this level of detail in a way that captures interviews, without using undue resource and time to manually collate the information. We do not believe the public interest is in this level of

detail, given the resources would be diverted from operational priorities. It should be noted that we have a number of individuals/ employees within the organisation who help us to respond effectively to media inquiries, and may provide interviews as part of a response.

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

Yes, we have a Media Policy, (attached)

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

Currently, we have five members of the team who have previously worked as journalists.

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

Given the small number of staff in our Communications team, there is potential that this information is identifiable, and we do not divulge individual employment terms, for reasonable privacy interests.

DHB Individual Employment Agreements use a pay-scale that is benchmarked with other public sector Health Service roles and functions, and is determined by the scope of each role. We note an indicative current average salary to these employees is around \$75,000, for internal / external communication roles. Providing the actual and lowest and highest salary will reveal the actual salary of two individuals. We are therefore declining your request under Section 9(2)(a) of the Act – to protect the privacy of natural persons.

I trust this information satisfactorily answers your query. If you are not satisfied with this response you are entitled to seek a review of the response by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act.

Please note that this response or an edited version of this will be published on the Counties Manukau DHB website.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'F. Apa', with a stylized flourish.

Fepulea'i Margie Apa  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Counties Manukau Health**