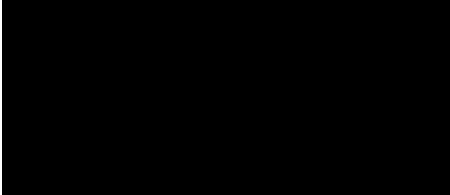


04 July 2022



Tēnā koe 

Thank you for your Official Information Act request to the Department of Conservation, received on 07 June 2022 in which you asked for:

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*

Context

The Department of Conservation (DOC) has a statutory responsibility (Conservation Act 1987) to inform, advocate and communicate on a wide range of issues. We invest in our communications function to raise awareness of the threats facing New Zealand's native species and ecosystems and engage with the general public about visiting the outdoors, safely.

In addition to communicating Government policy and programmes, the team covers a range of topics from safety alerts and track closures to fires, whale strandings, and extreme weather and climate change-related events.

There is a lot of interest in DOC's portfolio and the team responds to more than 2000 media inquiries each year during office hours and provides an afterhours service to support staff

and the media with breaking news, such as whale strandings, wildlife deaths, fires, storm damage and other emergencies.

In recent years the team has seen an increase in the frequency of serious weather events that affect DOC run huts, tracks and campsites, and marine mammal events that have required intensive public communications support.

Definitions used in our response

The staff numbers provided in this response include our Media and Communications, Internal Communications, Predator Free 2050 Communications, Social Media and Digital Content Teams all within the Public Affairs group.

The numbers in the tables are full time equivalents (FTE), and include permanent, fixed term and part-time staff.

Increases since 2016

Increases in the number of communications staff since 2016 can be linked to both the changes in communications practices, such as the growth of social media, and a number of new or expanded programmes funded through Budget appropriations, that have required additional communications and engagement support.

For example, in addition to increased investment in some key tourism and biodiversity programmes, dedicated resources have been required for fixed term periods for programmes of work such as Kauri Dieback, Myrtle Rust, wild animal (tahr) control, marine protection, Predator Free 2050, the National Predator Control programme, the Stewardship Land Review and Jobs for Nature.

A recent short-term increase in the Internal Communications team has been the result of additional capacity to cover illness and the increased requirement during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Your questions and our responses are listed 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)?*
2. *The salary range paid to communications staff in each year?*
3. *In each year, how many communications staff paid a salary more than \$100,000 per annum and \$200,000 per annum?*
4. *Total salary costs for communications staff each year?*

The table below answers questions 1 - 4. The total number of staff and total salary cost are taken at 30 June for each year except this year which are at 31 March 2022.

The staff covered in this request are paid in salary bands. The information supplied in the table below shows the high and low across the range of roles covered in this request.

No managers or staff are paid more than \$200k per annum.

Year	Total number of comms staff	Total salary cost	Salary range	Number of staff paid > \$100k
2016-17	19.39	\$1,566,731	Tier 4: \$87,119 - \$125,234 Tier 5: \$51,525 - \$93,407	2
2017-18	26.4	\$2,245,447	Tier 4: \$87,119 - \$125,234 Tier 5: \$45,496 - \$94,207	4
2018-19	27.4	\$2,401,877	Tier 4: \$87,119 - \$125,234 Tier 5: \$47,908 - \$104,084	5
2018-20	29.15	\$2,634,776	Tier 4: \$91,200 - \$171,350 Tier 5: \$48,483 - \$105,333	7
2020-21	30.95	\$2,694,239	Tier 4: \$91,200 - \$171,350 Tier 5: \$58,476 - \$128,351	9
31 March 2022	34.55	\$3,296,595	Tier 4: \$91,200 - \$171,350 Tier 5: \$61,916 - \$128,352	13

5. *Number of communications/media contractors used in each year.*

DOC does not as a rule use external contractors for the delivery of communications. One short-term (5 month) contract with a PR/Communications company was used to support the delivery of a commercial partnership programme. This was requested and funded by the partner organisation.

6. *Total sum paid to communications contractors in each year*

The cost of this contract was \$23,137.51. This was funded by the partnership funding not the Department's budget.

7. *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)*

The table below outlines the full time equivalent (FTE) numbers of Managers, Team leads, Principal Advisors, Senior Advisors, Advisors and Graduate or Assistant Advisors across the four teams (Media and Communications, Internal Communications, PF 2050 Communications and Digital Content Teams). The PF2050 initiative was announced in 2016 and the communications and engagement support team was established in 2017.

	21/22 @31 Mar	20/21 @30 June	19/20 @30 June	18/19 @30 June	17/18 @30 June	16/17 @30 June
Managers	3	4	4	4	4	2
Team Leads	4	4	3	2	1	1
Principal Advisors	2	1	1	1	1	-
Senior Advisors	5.7	4.85	3.6	4.55	2.5	3.19

Advisors	18.8	15.1	17.3	15.3	18.9	13.2
Grad /Ass Advisors	1	2	.25	.5		
TOTAL	34.55	30.95	29.15	27.4	27.4	19.39

8. How many media queries received in each year?

Year	2022 @ 17 June	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Approximate number (Office hours)	~ 800	~2300	~2200	~2100	~2300	Not recorded

9. How many interview requests received in each year? How many media interviews given, and to which media organisations and when?

Although we track the numbers of media inquiries, we do not differentiate between requests for information and individual interview requests.

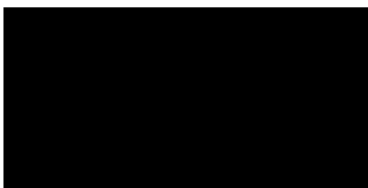
However, we can tell you that where possible, given availability of staff, we endeavour to respond positively to requests for interviews. For example, we did a manual count for just one month, May, this year. We had approximately 38 requests for interviews and 32 interviews were carried out.

You are entitled to seek an investigation and review of my decision by writing to an Ombudsman as provided by section 28(3) of the Official Information Act.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) and enclosed documents may be published on the Department's website.

If you wish to discuss this with the Department, please contact media@doc.govt.nz

Nāku noa, nā



Vicki Connor
Director Customer Engagement
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

