

19 February 2025



Tēnā koe 

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation (DOC), received on 04 February 2025, in which you asked:

'I request the following information from the Department of Conservation (DOC):

- 1. The total number of frontline staff currently employed by the Department of Conservation.*
- 2. The total number of rangers currently employed by the Department of Conservation.*

I request this information in electronic format where available. If any part of my request is unclear or likely to require substantial collation or research, please contact me as soon as possible so I may refine my request.'

We have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982.

Context

You have asked about 'frontline' staff. Questions around the Department's proportion of frontline and back-office staff is reported on as part of the Estimates¹ and Annual Review² processes at Select Committee.

The wording of the question itself provides a definition of sorts for frontline and back office as follows:

If there is a clear distinction between frontline and other staff, the numbers and percentages of staff defined as "front line" staff (those who provide a service directly to the public for a significant rather than an occasional part of their duties) and "back office" staff (those whose role is mainly to provide corporate support services to others within the department).

¹ Q11i https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/54SCENV_EVI_04ebf82a-2263-4232-0d8f-08dc86791985_ENV73936/5c9f11ae4b3605de1ea10646290b90fbc210c0d9

² Q67 https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/54SCENV_EVI_4ba6f6ec-e831-4299-2500-08dd01fbf860_ENV76961/1ad8cd5a1a72adc0204a15cafc973bf1a6a9d5a8

This definition of frontline/back office leaves a huge number of roles in DOC that fall between these two definitions of roles that provide a service 'directly to the public' and 'corporate roles'.

For reporting purposes, DOC has historically defined "frontline" to include only those roles that undertake public facing conservation work. This includes, for example, our regional operations staff, wild animal, plant pathogens and freshwater teams, and our engineering, works officers and asset planning teams as well as our Ngā Whenua Rāhui team. "Back office" includes all other staff, which includes corporate support, as well as our critical science and technical biodiversity teams, regulatory services teams, policy, Treaty settlement and legal teams. DOC's current definition of 'Back office' includes support/enabling functions that do have an important externally facing component, but which do not meet the definition of frontline conservation delivery work.

Your questions and our responses

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

1. The total number of frontline staff currently employed by the Department of Conservation.

As at 31 December 2024, (which is our most recent public reporting date) there were 1,478 staff in roles that are classified in our people systems as 'frontline'.

2. The total number of rangers currently employed by the Department of Conservation.

As at 31 December 2024, (which is our most recent public reporting date) there were 1,259 staff in roles that have a position type as 'Ranger' in our people systems. This includes roles that may not have 'Ranger' in the title, but which perform largely the same functions (e.g. Hut Warden).

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

If you would like to discuss this response with us, please contact Karen Chaney, Principal Advisor, People and Culture by email to kchaney@doc.govt.nz

Nāku noa, nā



Karyn Thompson
Chief People Officer
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai