



25 January 2024



Ref: OIA-2023/24-0351

Dear 

Official Information Act request relating to Christmas expenditure.

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 7 December 2023. You requested:

We request the following information:

End-of-Year Bonuses:

- Total amount paid in end-of-year bonuses to the CEO this Christmas.
- Total amount paid in bonuses to staff employed by your organization this Christmas.
- Please also provide the same for Christmas 2022.

Presents for Staff:

- Total expenditure on presents for staff including but not limited to 'secret Santa' etc.
- Please include this cost for last year also.

Christmas Trees and lights:

- Number of Christmas trees purchased and erected, and the cost of these purchases for this year.
- Please also include the cost for any Christmas lights for tree and any lights for buildings for this year.
- Please also include the cost of both for last year, too.
- Please highlight if the council had any left over from last year.

Christmas Party Supplies:

- Please breakdown the amount spent on the following for the years 2022 and 2023:
 - o Wrapping paper
 - o Santa hats
 - o Alcohol for parties
 - o Party hats
 - o Christmas crackers
 - o Christmas cards
 - o Christmas decorations

Christmas Parties:

- Total expenditure breakdown on Christmas parties. Please also include in the breakdown any travel arrangement costs.
- Please include this for last year, also.

Office Closure:

- Duration of office closure during the Christmas period.
- Please specify how many managers and senior executive staff are taking more hours/days out of office than is blanket across the Department/Ministry for the Christmas period.
- Does the Christmas office closure also affect contractors paid by the Department/Ministry? If not, how much are they being paid over the Christmas break in an hourly rate and how much is it expected to cost the Department/Ministry?"

I have responded to each of your questions in turn.

End-of-Year Bonuses:

- **Total amount paid in end-of-year bonuses to the CEO this Christmas.**

The Public Service Commissioner (the Commissioner) is the employer of Public Service chief executives and determines their remuneration. In 2018, the Commissioner took a new approach to managing the performance of chief executives, which included changing the structure of their remuneration. These changes mean performance pay entitlements are no longer included in chief executive employment agreements from 1 July 2018 and therefore there is no end of year bonus for the Chief Executive.

- **Total amount paid in bonuses to staff employed by your organization this Christmas.**
- **Please also provide the same for Christmas 2022.**

Neither DPMC nor NEMA paid bonuses to staff employed by them this Christmas, or last Christmas.

Presents for Staff:

- **Total expenditure on presents for staff including but not limited to 'secret Santa' etc.**
- **Please include this cost for last year also.**

We have interpreted this question to mean Christmas presents provided to staff. Neither DPMC nor NEMA provide staff with Christmas presents however, some managers give their staff a gift, which they do at their own cost. Similarly, any secret Santa events are self-funded.

If your request is broader than Christmas gifts you can find this information in the Estimates Review for 2023/24 at the following link: [a0c9c8e0bc3ba3eb0334ead092c0980bcc8b8d78 \(www.parliament.nz\)](https://www.parliament.nz/a0c9c8e0bc3ba3eb0334ead092c0980bcc8b8d78)

Christmas Trees and lights:

- **Number of Christmas trees purchased and erected, and the cost of these purchases for this year.**
- **Please also include the cost for any Christmas lights for tree and any lights for buildings for this year.**
- **Please also include the cost of both for last year, too.**
- **Please highlight if the council had any left over from last year.**

Employees are able to decorate their work environment with Christmas decorations if they wish. Decorations are recycled from previous years and/or bought in by individuals at no cost to DPMC or NEMA.

Christmas Party Supplies:

- **Please breakdown the amount spent on the following for the years 2022 and 2023:**
 - **Wrapping paper**
 - **Santa hats**
 - **Alcohol for parties**
 - **Party hats**
 - **Christmas crackers**
 - **Christmas cards**
 - **Christmas decorations**

DPMC and NEMA did not provide Christmas party supplies of the types listed in either 2022 or 2023.

Christmas Parties:

- ***Total expenditure breakdown on Christmas parties. Please also include in the breakdown any travel arrangement costs.***
- ***Please include this for last year, also.***

For the year ending 2023, an end of year Christmas afternoon tea was held for DPMC employees with all costs covered by the Executive Leadership Team personally. Any gatherings that are organised within the business unit are funded by the individuals involved.

NEMA did not have office-funded Christmas parties in 2023 and so incurred no expenditure.

For Christmas 2022, DPMC and NEMA provided a \$25 per head (plus GST) contribution to Christmas parties held by different teams within the organisations. Providing a breakdown of how much was spent on this in 2022 is refused under section 18(f) of the Act, as we do not record this information in our finance system in an easily retrievable way, and therefore it would require substantial collation or research.

Office Closure:

- ***Duration of office closure during the Christmas period.***

DPMC and NEMA offices were shut from close of business on 22 December 2023 until Monday 8 January 2024. The shutdown applied to all staff, other than staff in NEMA's Monitoring, Alerting and Reporting Centre which is operational 24/7, 365 days a year, and some staff may also work to support the operation of Government House over the Christmas/New Year period.

Employees' leave over the shutdown period is made up of public holidays, departmental days, and annual leave. Eligible employees are entitled to up to five days paid departmental days, typically during the period between Christmas and New Year. Any employee who is not eligible for this entitlement is required to request annual leave during that period. The entitlement to departmental days is instead of offering a fifth week of annual leave.

- ***Please specify how many managers and senior executive staff are taking more hours/days out of office than is blanket across the Department/Ministry for the Christmas period.***

All staff are able to take further annual leave in line with their individual leave balances and subject to approval from their People Leaders.

To provide a breakdown of how many managers and senior executive staff have taken leave outside the shutdown period would require identification of all manager and senior executive roles. That breakdown would then need to be manually cross referenced with employees who have taken annual leave during the period in question, and this would require substantial collation and research and therefore is refused under section 18(f) of the Act.

I have considered whether consulting you may enable a reframing of this query such that the reason for refusal is alleviated; however, I did not identify any amendment that would enable us to readily respond. I have also considered extending the timeframe for response and/or fixing a charge and determined that neither would enable or remove the reason for refusal.

- ***Does the Christmas office closure also affect contactors paid by the Department/Ministry? If not, how much are they being paid over the Christmas break in an hourly rate and how much is it expected to cost the Department/Ministry?***

The Christmas office closure affects contractors as well as employees. Contractors are not paid during this time as they are not working.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

This response will be published on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's website during our regular publication cycle. Typically, information is released monthly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

Yours sincerely



Clare Ward
Executive Director
Strategy, Governance and Engagement