

6 July 2022

s9(2)(a)

Talofa lava s9(2)(a)

## RESPONSE TO AN OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

On 7 June 2022, you contacted the Ministry for Pacific Peoples (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), information regarding communications staff and media queries. I have outlined your specific questions and my responses to each below.

*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)*

I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(d) of the OIA as the information requested is publicly available on the Parliament website in the Ministry's Annual Reviews.

As per our Annual Review responses, you will see that our Communications, Media and Marketing team grew by four from the 2019/20 financial year to the 2020/21 financial year. In response to COVID-19, the Ministry received funding through the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund to deliver messages to Pacific communities. The four additional staff were fixed-term based on the need for bespoke COVID-19 campaigns related to keeping Pacific communities safe, increasing vaccination rates and where to access support.

The Ministry has led the Government's Pacific COVID-19 communications campaign and works in collaboration with government agencies such as the Ministry of Health, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Ministry of Social Development to deliver key COVID-19 messages targeted to Pacific communities.

To date, the Ministry has translated all official key messages into the nine Pacific languages that the Ministry formally supports, and COVID-19 information is broadcast through a series of established and effective communications channels including television, social media, radio, print and online. The campaign has sought to increase community engagement and enrich the quality and flow of information and messages to Pacific communities on the Government's advice and response to managing COVID-19.

As at November 2021, the Ministry had reached over two million people with its COVID-19 campaigns and during this month, 90 percent of Pacific peoples in New Zealand had received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Reaching this milestone was a testament to the importance of creating communications campaigns targeted to Pacific communities and engaging with Pacific communities in culturally appropriate ways.

The Ministry also produced targeted campaigns to engage subgroups of the Pacific population, this included vulnerable groups such as Pacific youth. If you are interested, you can find information about some of the Ministry’s online campaigns on our website here: [www.mpp.govt.nz/covid-19](http://www.mpp.govt.nz/covid-19). These campaigns provide a platform for conversation and dissemination of accurate information.

*2. The salary range paid to communications staff in each year.*

Due to the limited staff in the Communications Team within the Ministry, I am withholding the salary range paid to communications staff under section 9(2)(a) to protect the privacy of natural persons.

- 3. Number of communications/media contractors used in each year.*
- 4. Total sum paid to communications contractors in each year*

I am refusing these parts of your request under section 18(d) of the OIA as the information requested is publicly available on the Parliament website in the Ministry’s Annual Reviews.

*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)*

Please refer to Table 1 below which provides a breakdown of positions for the previous five financial years.

**Table 1: Breakdown of positions and numbers employed in the Ministry for Pacific Peoples’ Communications, Media and Marketing team for the 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years**

Financial year	Position
2017/18	1 Chief Advisor 2 Senior Advisors
2018/19	1 Director 2 Senior Advisors 1 Advisor
2019/20	1 Director 4 Senior Advisors, Communications 1 Advisor 1 Event Coordinator
2020/21	1 Director 2 Managers - 1x Digital Channels and Marketing - 1x Strategic Communications and External Relations 1 Project Manager 1 Events Manager 6 Senior Advisors* - 4x Communications (1 vacancy) - 1x Web - 1x Design

Financial year	Position
	4 Advisors (3 vacancies)* *3 Senior Advisors, Communications and 1 Advisor were fixed term roles due to the need for bespoke COVID-19 campaigns.
2021/22	1 Director 2 Managers (vacant) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1x Digital Channels and Marketing</li> <li>- 1x Strategic Communications and External Relations</li> </ul> 1 Events Lead (vacant) 1 Design Lead (vacant) 8 Senior Advisors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3x Strategic (1 vacancy)*</li> <li>- 5x Digital Marketing (3 vacancies)*</li> </ul> 1 Strategic Advisor (vacant) 2 Advisor, Digital Marketing (vacant) *1 Senior Advisor, Strategic and 1 Senior Advisor, Digital Marketing are fixed term roles due to the need for bespoke COVID-19 campaigns.

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?

Prior to the 2021/22 financial year, the Ministry did not hold data on the number of media queries and interview requests received at a granular level. This has since been rectified and the Ministry now captures this information consistently. Accordingly, I must refuse the part of your request for the 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 financial years under section 18(e) of the OIA as the information requested cannot be found, despite reasonable efforts to locate it. I can, however, provide you with the figures for the 2021/22 financial year. Please refer to Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Media queries and interview requests received by the Ministry for Pacific Peoples in the 2021/22 financial year**

	2021/22 financial year
Media queries received	12
Interview requests received	16
Interviews given	7

**Table 3: Media interviews given by Ministry for Pacific Peoples staff in the 2021/22 financial year**

Media organisation	Number of interviews	Date of interview(s)
Niu FM	4	1. 09/09/21
		2. 24/09/21
		3. 29/10/21
		4. 11/11/21
531pi	1	02/11/21
ABC Radio Australia	1	22/09/21
Wellington Access Radio	1	27/05/22

You will note there is a discrepancy between interview requests received and interviews given. In five cases, the interviews did not go ahead as the journalist requesting the interview did not follow up with the Ministry once a spokesperson was provided. In three cases, the interview requests were referred on to other agencies or organisations to respond appropriately. In one case, it was mutually agreed that providing a statement would suffice.

9. *Total salary costs for communications staff each year*

I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(d) of the OIA as the information requested is publicly available on the Parliament website in the Ministry's Annual Reviews.

10. *In each year, how many communications staff paid a salary more than \$100,000 per annum and \$200,000 per annum*

I am withholding this information under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA to protect the privacy of natural persons due to the small number of staff in the Ministry's Communications, Media and Marketing team.

In line with standard OIA practice, the Ministry proactively publishes its responses to OIA requests. As such, this letter will be published on the Ministry for Pacific Peoples' website. Your personal details will be removed, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you or your company.

Should you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact the Ministry at: [uia\\_requests@mpp.govt.nz](mailto:uia_requests@mpp.govt.nz).

If you are dissatisfied with this response, you have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Ia manuia



Agnes Sefo  
**Deputy Secretary,**  
**Office of the Secretary for Pacific Peoples**