

MINO-0432 Waka Kotahi Communications Staff

21 July 2022

A summary of recent responses and positions on Waka Kotahi Communications staffing numbers and roles, in relation to WPQ-25346 (2022) which the Minister's Office will be answering:

25346 (2022). Simon Court to the Minister of Transport (19 Jul 2022): Has the Minister engaged with Waka Kotahi in relation to its growing number of communications staff; if so, what was the substance of this engagement?

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency's response:

Public Service Commission Advice

This is attached as attachment 01.

Recent Written Question Responses

14904 (2022). Simeon Brown to the Minister of Transport (13 May 2022): How many NZTA communications staff, if any, are based in each of New Zealand's regions, with the data broken down by each region, and how many, if any, are based in Wellington city?

Hon Michael Wood (Minister of Transport) replied: As at 28 February 2022, Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency had approx. 35 FTE staff working in roles classified as communications. These communications roles undertake work relating to media, internal communications, and communications supporting national and strategic programmes. This includes headcounts of 25 in Wellington, 7 in Auckland, 1 in Christchurch, 2 in Napier and 1 Tauranga. This represents 1.5% of Waka Kotahi's total FTE.

Waka Kotahi also has a number of project liaison and community engagement staff based in our regions supporting infrastructure projects throughout the country, however these staff are not classified as communications roles.

14902 (2022). Simeon Brown to the Minister of Transport (13 May 2022): How much, if anything, has NZTA spent on contracting communications staff each year for the past five years?

Hon Michael Wood (Minister of Transport) replied: This information is publicly available in section 52 of the 2020/21 Annual review of Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, Responses to written questions 1-215. It is available at: www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/53SCTI_EVI_116640_TI2301/8086071905b0413a0c7a58c7a61ecde9c2abe829

15134 (2022). Chris Bishop to the Minister of Transport (16 May 2022): In relation to his reported comment on Newshub, "I've sent Waka Kotahi a reminder recently that they need to be careful and considered with their expenditure", when did he do that, how did he do that, and what did the reminder say?

Hon Michael Wood (Minister of Transport) replied: On March 9 2022, a private secretary in my office emailed the Chief of Staff and Senior Manager Government of Waka Kotahi the following message on my behalf;

On behalf of the Minister, while we understand the important role that communications devices like the lightboxes play as part of the broader marketing efforts for the Road to Zero campaign, we want to remind Waka Kotahi that it is important that all spending it undertakes as part of the project should be responsible and proportionate, and should at all times consider whether or not the spend is good value for money. The purchase of the lightboxes, which may have some utility as part of the broader marketing objectives for several years, should be considered in light of the fiscal environment the Government is operating in. As such, we would ask Waka Kotahi to consider for future campaigns whether such devices are necessary to achieve the outcomes sought.

15703 (2022). Simeon Brown to the **Minister of Transport** (19 May 2022): How many communications staff (including contractors for communications), if any, does NZTA currently have as at 19 May 2022?

Hon Michael Wood (Minister of Transport) replied: As at 19 May 2022, Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency had 35.1 FTE staff working in roles classified as communications. Waka Kotahi has also engaged seven contractors in communications focused roles.

These communications roles undertake work relating to media, internal communications, and communications supporting national and strategic programmes.

17855 (2022). Simeon Brown to the **Minister of Transport** (07 Jun 2022): How many full time equivalent Communications staff, if any, were there at NZTA for each year over the past five years?

Hon Michael Wood (Minister of Transport) replied: 2018: 32.55 FTE

2019: 38.6 FTE

2020: 72.58 FTE

2021: 80.7 FTE

2022: 30.1 FTE (as at 28 February 2022)

File Note (not released):

Waka Kotahi has re-classified its roles in accordance with central government guidance as to what constitutes "communications" roles. Previously included in this category were Waka Kotahi project liaison and community engagement roles, which accounts for the reduction in numbers from 2020/21.

18549 (2022). Simeon Brown to the **Minister of Transport** (07 Jun 2022): How many FTE employees and contractors does NZTA currently employ in its communications, engagement, media and social media teams, if any?

Hon Michael Wood (Minister of Transport) replied: 97.74.

OIA Requests and Responses

OIA-10549 Georgina Campbell at NZ Herald (due 12 August)

Requests a number of documents including:

Wood 12/05/2022 MINO-0392 Supporting information on the increased number of Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency back-office staff

A copy of MINO-0392 is attached as attachment 02.

OIA-10264 from Anusha Bradley of Radio NZ (due 27 July)

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*

This response is being finalised and will soon be provided to the Office for standard consultation. The response uses data compiled in line with PSC advice and aligns with WPQ-14904. The response will show a consistent level of approximately 30-odd "comms" staff once additional engagement and regional roles are correctly excluded.

OIA-10160 and 10294 section 9(2)(a)

Under the OIA, I request all communications received from the Minister of Transport or any other Ministers in the last four years regarding: - the number of communications staff employed by NZTA - the number of external consultants contracted by NZTA - the amount spent by NZTA on communications staff - the amount spent by NZTA on external consultants

The responses from Waka Kotahi to these two connected OIAs are attached.