



9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 18 July 2023 to the Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

I have a few questions about your Māori language allowance.

- *Can you please tell me how much money the Ministry offers staff for what level of Māori language proficiency?*
- *When was the allowance established, and what is its purpose?*
- *Is the payment restricted for particular use (or is it essentially a bonus)?*
- *How many staff received such a payment in the last fiscal year?*
- *What was the total cost of these bonuses in the last fiscal year?*
- *Does the Ministry offer any other bonuses (in a similar fashion) for desirable skills or proficiencies?*
- *What did the department spend in the last fiscal year on Māori language/skills training (excluding the bonus/allowance)?*

1. Can you please tell me how much money the Ministry offers staff for what level of Māori language proficiency?

Answer:

Level Finder Attestation	Descriptor/Objectives	Gross Annual Allowance (\$ p.a.)
5	Complete proficiency: Reward excellence and cultural contribution	3,500
4	Higher proficiency: Reward cultural contribution	2,500
3	Moderate proficiency: Encourage development	1,800

2	Basic conversational proficiency: Support on-going learning	1,000
1	Basic routine language: Encourage entry level learning	700

2. When was the allowance established, and what is its purpose?

Answer: The earliest form of the allowance appears in the Ministry's 1997 Collective Employment Agreement with the Public Service Association. Specific rates were listed in the 2008 version of the collective.

3. Is the payment restricted for particular use (or is it essentially a bonus)?

Answer: The Ministry offers an Annual Allowance for employees who have been certified by Te Taura Whiri (Māori Language Commission) for skills in Te Reo. The allowance is based on the level of proficiency. This will not be paid when Māori language/skills/knowledge of culture is a job requirement and is rewarded within the level of remuneration for that position.

4. How many staff received such a payment in the last fiscal year?

Answer: Twenty-one employees received the allowance during the 2022/23 financial year.

5. What was the total cost of these bonuses in the last fiscal year?

Answer: \$15,448.33

6. Does the Ministry offer any other bonuses (in a similar fashion) for desirable skills or proficiencies?

Answer: The Ministry does not pay any other allowances or bonuses based on proficiency in any other skill.

7. What did the department spend in the last fiscal year on Māori language/skills training (excluding the bonus/allowance)?

Answer: The Ministry spent \$7,200.00 on courses where we have invested in employees' understanding of Te Reo Māori and Māori skills (such as Māori values and principles).

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of my response relating to this request, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on their website at: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Please note that due to the public interest in our work the Ministry for the Environment publishes responses to requests for official information on our [OIA responses page](#) shortly after the response has been sent. If you have any queries about this, please feel free to contact our Ministerial Services team: ministerials@mfe.govt.nz.

Ngā mihi



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