



OIAD-899

9(2)a

Tēnā koe 9(2)a,

Thank you for your email to the Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) of 7 December 2023 requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

1. 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.*

2. 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.*

3. 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.*

4. 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*

5. 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.*

6. 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?*

The Ministry has provided a response to each part of your request below.

1. End-of-year bonuses

The Ministry does not pay employees an end of year bonus.

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.

2. Presents for Staff

The Ministry does not provide Christmas gifts to employees.

3. Christmas trees and lights

The Ministry did not purchase any Christmas trees or lights for Christmas 2022 or 2023.

4. Christmas Party Supplies

The Ministry did not purchase wrapping paper, party hats, Christmas crackers, Christmas cards or Christmas decorations in 2022 or 2023.

Therefore, we must refuse the above parts of your request under section 18(e) of the Act because the information requested does not exist.

However, the Ministry did purchase Santa hats, alcohol and a prize for the best Christmas t-shirt and the quiz for the 2022 Christmas Party.

<i>Type</i>	<i>FY22-23</i>
<i>Alcohol</i>	<i>\$1751</i>
<i>Santa hats</i>	<i>\$ 35</i>
<i>T-Shirt competition/Quiz prize</i>	<i>\$ 43</i>
<i>Grand Total</i>	<i>\$1829</i>

5. Christmas Parties

The Ministry's policy for the 2023 – 2024 financial year was to have a set limit of \$20 per person for the contribution towards team end of year celebrations, noting that this cannot be used for alcohol purchases and can only be allocated to one event per person.

In the previous two financial years this contribution has been used by staff to subsidise team meals or activities and does not allow for travel arrangements for Christmas parties. The breakdown of this expenditure is outlined below.

<i>Type</i>	<i>FY22-23</i>	<i>FY23-24</i>	<i>Grand Total</i>
<i>Christmas Activity</i>		<i>\$ 157</i>	<i>\$ 157</i>
<i>Subsidised Christmas meal</i>	<i>\$ 250</i>	<i>\$ 4,942</i>	<i>\$ 5,192</i>
<i>Catering for Christmas Party</i>	<i>\$ 3,451</i>		<i>\$ 3,451</i>
<i>Grand Total</i>	<i>\$ 3,701</i>	<i>\$ 5,099</i>	<i>\$ 8,800</i>

6. Office Closure

The Ministry shut down for two weeks over the 2023/24 Christmas period.

The Ministry considers that taking leave is an important part of maintaining staff wellbeing and accordingly staff are encouraged to use their annual leave to extend their time off over the holiday period if they wish.

The Ministry has interpreted “managers and senior executives” to refer to staff at tiers 2, 3 and 4 of the organisation. Please note that this includes Chief and Principal advisors. Due to the way this information is recorded we are unable to separate General Managers and

Managers from the data as a whole. The following number of staff at these tiers were on leave for a longer period than the required closedown:

Staff level	Number
Deputy Secretaries (Tier 2)	3
General Managers and Chief Advisors (Tier 3)	15
Managers and Principal Advisors (Tier 4)	119

The shut down period applies to all employees at the Ministry including contractors. Contractors on an hourly rate contract are only paid for the hours they work and accordingly are not paid over the shutdown.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of my decision 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,



Adelyn Wischnowsky
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Ministry for the Environment | Manatū Mō Te Taiao