

25 May 2023

s 9(2)(a)

**Your request for official information, reference: HN200011902**

Thank you for your email on 21 February 2023, asking for the following which has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

*"I would like to request the following information under the Official Information Act:*

**Part 1)** *The total cost of outsourced (locum) medical specialists, for each of the last five calendar years, broken down by geographic region and specialist department for Te Whatu Ora and its preceding DHB organisations.*

**Part 2)** *The total number of outsourced (locum) medical specialists used, for each of the last five calendar years, broken down by geographic region and specialist department for Te Whatu Ora and its preceding DHB organisations.*

*Please supply this information in a table format in an Excel spreadsheet or similar. If you withhold any information, please advise the provision in the Act and supporting reasons for the withholding".*

On 22 February 2023, we clarified your request with you to which you replied with the below:

*"Time period: Each of the last five calendar years.  
Geographical regions: Each of the former DHB boundaries.  
Specialist departments: Each speciality for which you have the data coded for.  
Preceding DHB organisations: Each of the former DHB organisations prior to Te Whatu Ora's establishment"*

Due to the scope of part 1 of your request, even with your refinement, we are unable to provide you with information regarding the total cost of locum specialists for the last five years. To collate this information, we estimate it would take approximately 320-400 hours. This would result in a significant disruption to our day-to-day business. As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

We have also considered whether Te Whatu Ora would be able to respond to your requests given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. In either case, our ability to undertake our other core functions would still be impacted.

11 out of 15 districts were unable to provide the information you have requested for Part 2 of your request, due to the scope of the request. Providing you with this data and information would significantly impact the ability of our districts to carry out their other core operations. Therefore, your request is partially refused under 18(f) of the Act as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

The following Te Whatu Ora districts were unable to respond to Part 2 of your request:

- Waitematā
- Auckland
- Counties Manukau
- Waikato
- Bay of Plenty
- MidCentral
- Capital & Coast
- Hutt Valley
- Hawke's Bay
- Canterbury
- West Coast
- Nelson Marlborough
- Southern

The four districts that are able to provide information related to Part 2 of your request (**Appendix 1**) are:

- Lakes;
- Taranaki;
- Northland; and
- South Canterbury.

Please note, in addition to the information provided by the above Districts (Appendix 1), Te Whatu Ora is carrying out work to shift to a shared data system. At present, however, each district holds and retrieves data differently. While this work will take some time to embed, it will ensure our data system is more efficient and accessible in the future. Data integrity and availability is important to the way we work, and we make these changes with the goal of ensuring a health system that better serves all New Zealanders.

If you have any questions, you can contact us at [h.nz.OIA@health.govt.nz](mailto:h.nz.OIA@health.govt.nz).

If you are not happy with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman. Information about how to do this is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or by phoning 0800 802 602.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, Te Whatu Ora may proactively release a copy of this response on our website. All requester data, including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Michael Cleary  
**Acting OIA Manager**  
**Government Services**

**Appendix 1:** The total number of outsourced (locum) medical specialists used, for each of the last five calendar years, broken down by geographic region and specialist department for Te Whatu Ora and its preceding DHB organisations

<b>Lakes</b>					
<b>Specialist Department</b>	<b>Jan – Dec 2018</b>	<b>Jan – Dec 2019</b>	<b>Jan – Dec 2020</b>	<b>Jan – Dec 2021</b>	<b>*Jan – Dec 2022</b>
Emergency	38	33	106	75	12
Medicine	27	78	51	29	17
Anaesthetics	10	9	5	23	4
Mental Health	17	27	12	38	10
Radiology	4	2	13	4	4
O&G	25	26	18	35	13
Orthopaedics	-	4	-	-	11
General Surgery		14	6	12	3
<b>Total locum specialists used</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>*74</b>

*\*The data provided for 2022 is the most current data we hold. This may be subject to change as there were staff changes in the Medical Management Unit towards the end of 2022.*

<b>Taranaki</b>					
Specialist Department	Jan – Dec 2018	Jan – Dec 2019	Jan – Dec 2020	Jan – Dec 2021	Jan – Dec 2022
Mental Health Services (includes Mental Health Services of Older Peoples Health and Child & Adolescent MH Services)	2	4	12	8	6
Medical Services (includes Cardiology, Endocrinology, Older Peoples Health, Renal, Rheumatology)	2	2	7	10	12
Surgical Services (includes ENT)	1	2	1	2	1
Radiology Department	1	3	3	3	2
Obstetrics and Gynaecology Services (including Maternity Services)	1	1	2	2	6
Emergency medicine	-	-	1	2	2
Rural Health Medicine	-	-	-	4	3
Public Health	-	-	-	-	1
<b>Total locum specialists used</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>34</b>

*The information above is reflective of senior medical locums. Locums who worked over one calendar year into the next calendar year have been counted in each year. Locums have provided cover for periods as little as 1 to 2 days in duration, and some up to a year. We have counted the number of individual locums who provided services in a calendar year, rather than the number of locums they may have performed in that year, e.g. if a locum worked 3 different times during 2020, this number has been recorded as 1.*

Northland					
Specialist Department	Jan – Dec 2018	Jan – Dec 2019	Jan – Dec 2020	Jan – Dec 2021	Jan – Dec 2022
Dental	3	3	2	-	-
Emergency Medicine	8	24	9	7	6
ENT (ears, nose, and throat)	6	7	10	3	4
Gastroenterology	4	4	12	14	16
General medicine	22	25	13	7	23
General surgery	9	6	3	5	8
Geriatric medicine	7	7	3	1	1
Hepatology	1	1	5	1	1
ICU/ Anaesthetics	12	10	7	5	1
Nursing & midwifery project	-	-	1	-	-
Oncology	2	2	5	2	7
Ophthalmology	6	7	11	4	2
Orthopaedics	2	1	1	2	1
Paediatrics	5	5	5	4	4
Pathology	10		1	3	4
Psychiatry	28	25	40	31	28
Public health	1	2	-	2	1
Radiology	1	3	3	1	-
Renal	-	-	1	3	5
Rural - Bay of islands	6	12	19	14	17
Rural - Dargaville	14	11	19	19	9
Rural - Kaitaia	18	11	6	12	13
Sexual health	8	7	4	3	2
Urology	-	-	2	12	6
Total locum specialists used	173	173	182	155	159

*The above locum numbers are only counted once for each year, irrelevant of if they worked multiple assignments etc. Above locums working in specialities may have been based at different locations throughout Northland (e.g. Bay of Islands, Kaitaia, or Dargaville). Some of the above specialities cover sub-specialities e.g. General Medicine – cardiology, respiratory etc.*

<b>South Canterbury</b>					
Specialist Department	Jan – Dec 2018	Jan – Dec 2019	Jan – Dec 2020	Jan – Dec 2021	Jan – Dec 2022
Anaesthesia	2	10		1	7
Emergency Medicine	14	15	11	18	10
General Medicine	3	1	1	5	1
General Surgery	1	-	1	2	-
Geriatric Medicine	2	2	1	-	-
Obstetrics & Gynaecology	7	3	5	5	5
Ophthalmology	1	-	-	-	-
Orthopaedic Surgery	4	5	1	5	4
Paediatric Medicine	5	3	2	3	2
Psychiatry	3	4	4	7	5
Total locum specialists used	42	43	26	46	34