

28 September 2022

9(2)(a)



**RE Official information request WCD 9738 / HNZ 3786**

I refer to your email dated 8 September 2022 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from Te Tai o Poutini West Coast regarding Buller Health staffing.

Buller Health includes both the general practice (Buller Medical) as well as the acute stabilisation and observation services (Acute Services), and has doctors covering both areas. The doctors' employment with us is not split or differentiated between general practice and the Acute Services. For the purpose of this request, we have included all doctors working as either locum or permanent employees engaged in the Buller Health system.

With this caveat noted, the answer to your specific questions are as follows:

- 1. How many locum doctors did Buller Health employ in the year to June 30, 2022, and how many FTE positions does that equate to?***

During the year to 30 June 2022, there were 22 individuals who served as locum doctors at Buller Health in the general practice and the Acute Services (as defined above). Locum cover equated to an average of 1.56 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) doctors over the 12-month period.

- 2. How many permanent GPs did Buller Health employ in the same period and how many FTE positions does that equate to?***

During the year to 30 June 2022, there were six individuals who served as permanent GP doctors at Buller Health in the general practice and the Acute Services (as defined above). This equated to an average of 4.3 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) permanent doctors over the 12-month period. Two nurse practitioners contributed a further 1.31 FTE.

In addition, there were five individuals Rural Health Medicine Specialists (RHM) based in Te Nīkau Hospital & Health Centre, who provided support during the year at an average of 0.15 FTE for the period.

- 3. What was the cost of locum doctors for salaries and other expenses?***

The total cost of locum doctors providing cover to Buller Health (as defined above) in the year to 30 June 2022 was \$843,346. This is inclusive of service fees \$660,789, agency fees \$90,392 and other expenses \$92,164.

- 4. What was the minimum and maximum length of stay among locum doctors working at Buller Health during the year?***

Length of service provided by these individuals ranged from a 1-day relief cover up to one doctor who worked for a period of 121 days in the year ended 30 June 2022.

**5. What was the cost of permanent doctors' for salaries and other expenses?**

The total cost of permanent doctors working in the Buller Health (as defined above) in the year to 30 June 2022, excluding RMO Registrars, was \$1,400,454 inclusive of salaries and other expense costs. We are declining to provide a further breakdown of these costs under Section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act i.e. *"...to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons."*

**6. How many practice nurses did Buller Health employ in the year to June 30, 2022, and what does that equate to in FTEs?**

We only have practice nurses at the Buller Medical general practice service (excluding practice nurse FTE that work in satellite clinics of Buller Medical, such as Ngakawau and Karamea) and have interpreted Questions 6 and 7 accordingly. This noted, and including casuals for cover, there were 25 individual practice nurses employed for various periods of service at the Buller Medical general practice in Westport only, as counted if employed at any time during the year to 30 June 2022. This equated to an annualised 7.02 FTE employed during the year.

**7. What was the cost of practice nurses for the year to June 30, 2022?**

As defined in Question 6 above, the cost of the practice nurses employed at Buller Medical in Westport during the year to 30 June 2022 was \$648,706. This is inclusive of leave provisions and other associated employment costs.

I trust that this satisfies your interest in this matter.

You may, under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act, seek a review of our decision to withhold information 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.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the Te Tai o Poutini West Coast website after your receipt of this response.

Ngā mihi / Yours sincerely,



Ralph La Salle  
Senior Manager, OIAs  
Waitaha Canterbury / Te Tai o Poutini West Coast.