



West Coast District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora a Rohe o Tai Poutini

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24 March 2020

9(2)(a)

RE Official Information Act request WCDHB 9396

I refer to your email dated 20 February 2020 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from West Coast DHB specifically:

- 1. The number of births per month at Kawatiri Maternity Unit in the past five years (to June 30, 2019), and the number of Buller mothers who birthed in Greymouth Hospital over the same period (also per month please).***

The number of births at Kawatiri Maternity Unit and for Buller-domiciled mothers who gave birth at Grey Base Hospital (based on date of discharge from hospital), by month over the last five years to 30 June 2019 are as follows:

1(a). Births at Kawatiri by month:

Births at Kawatiri	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
2014/15	0	2	1	2	1	3	0	0	0	1	2	3
2015/16	5	4	2	1	1	4	0	3	3	3	0	4
2016/17	1	2	4	0	3	0	4	2	1	2	1	2
2017/18	0	2	1	3	1	2	3	1	1	3	3	1
2018/19	3	3	0	2	3	1	1	0	1	2	0	1

1 (b). Births at Grey Base Hospital by mothers domiciled in Buller by month (based on date of discharge from hospital):

Buller births at Grey Base Hospital	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
2014/15	6	4	3	5	1	2	4	4	9	3	4	4
2015/16	5	4	2	1	5	1	1	4	2	6	3	4
2016/17	3	4	1	2	5	6	2	4	4	5	4	5
2017/18	0	2	2	5	0	2	7	1	0	4	6	2
2018/19	3	4	4	3	0	2	4	3	2	2	4	3

2. *The number of home births in Buller per month over the same period.*

Self-employed Lead Maternity Carers report birth activity directly to the Ministry of Health, who then collate and report data back to DHBs for their regions by calendar year only. Accordingly, home births for the Buller region reported to West Coast DHB over the last five calendar years have been as follows:

- 2015 – 2
- 2016 – 0
- 2017 – 2
- 2018 – 3
- 2019 - 1

3. *The number of Buller mothers who birthed outside the Coast over the same period.*

Self-employed Lead Maternity Carers report birth activity directly to the Ministry of Health, who then collate and report data back to DHBs for their regions by calendar year only. Data collated by the Ministry of Health for the number of Buller mothers birthing off the West Coast for 2018 and 2019 has not yet been released to DHBs. For the prior calendar years, the number of such cases reported had been as follows:

- 2015 – 49
- 2016 – 54
- 2017 - 40

- 4. *The number of patient transfers from Buller Hospital to hospitals elsewhere, per month, in the past five years (to June 30, 2019).***
- 5. *The number of those transfers to each hospital (ie Greymouth, Christchurch, Nelson).***
- 6. *The number of transfers from Buller Hospital by ambulance, and the number by helicopter, per month, for the same period.***
- 7. *The cost of ambulance transfers from Buller each year, and the cost of helicopter transfers each year.***
- 8. *The number of fixed wing transfers per month from Buller over the five years, and the cost of those transfers.***
- 9. *The number of those fixed wing transfers to each hospital.***

Response to Questions 4 to 9:

Please see the tables attached as **Appendix 1** that provide the month by month breakdown of patients transferred from our Buller Health facility to hospitals in other centres by the various modes of road and air transfer as you have requested in questions 4 to 9 above, for the five years from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2019.

With regard to transfer costs, the current cost in 2019/20 to West Coast DHB for an ambulance transfer from Buller to Grey Hospital is \$460 per trip. The cost of helicopter and fixed wing aircraft transfers vary dependent on destination and flight time, so each flight can be unique. On average, the current cost of a helicopter air ambulance flight from Buller to Grey in 2019/20 is usually around \$5,455 per return trip. Helicopter transfers from Buller to Christchurch may range from \$15,750 to just under \$17,000 for a return trip, and those to Nelson from \$12,000 to just over \$15,000. Fixed wing aircraft costs vary considerably due to flight time, destination, and crew configuration.

ACC pays for inter-hospital transfers that occur within 24 hours of accident for those patients who have an accident-related event. West Coast DHB otherwise pays the cost for those inter-hospital transfers made at request of DHB staff.

We are unable to provide overall costs in respect of specific modes of transport type used for inter-hospital transfers. Transfers of all type are coded to one account within the West Coast DHB, and there is no specific breakdown of information by transport mode, nor separating out for the Buller region, for the time periods you have requested. To endeavour to extract the figures for helicopter transfers (or other specific transport modes) would require a manual review, sorting and compilation of data from archived invoices relating to each individual patient transfer. As such, the information requested cannot be made available without substantial additional cost, collation and research. Because of that, we decline your request to provide this information under Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act on the grounds of substantial collation and research.

I trust that this satisfies your interest in this matter.

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Gullery', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Carolyn Gullery
Executive Director
Planning, Funding & Decision Support.

Appendix 1: Transfers from Buller Health to Hospitals in other locations by various transport modes, month by month, 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2019.

	2014					
Destination Hospital / Mode of Transfer	July	August	September	October	November	December
Christchurch	2	10	2	6	2	2
Ambulance		5	1			1
Helicopter				2		
DHB Board Car	1	1	1	1		1
Pressurised Aircraft		2		3	1	
Private Motor Vehicle	1	2			1	
Grey	10		21	10	17	12
Ambulance	2		2	1	2	3
Helicopter	3		8	3	6	4
DHB Board Car	2		4		2	3
Not specified				2	3	
Private Motor Vehicle	3		7	4	4	2

Destination Hospital / Mode of Transfer	2015											
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Christchurch	12	8	6	6	8	6	12	8	8		10	6
Ambulance	2	2		2	2	4		2				
Helicopter	2		2	2	4		2		4		2	4
DHB Board Car					2						2	2
Not specified	4	2					2					
Pressurised Aircraft		4		2		2	6	4	2		2	
Pressurised Aircraft (shared)							2					
Private Motor Vehicle	4		4					2	2		4	
Christchurch Women's		2										2
Pressurised Aircraft		2										2
Grey	13	22	15	16	18	17	16	18	20	18	19	19
Air (not otherwise specified)									1			
Ambulance	2	6	8	11	7	10	3	6	4	6	4	10
Helicopter	3	3	4	1	3	2	6	6	7	4	4	3
DHB Board Car	4	4	1	1	2	1	2	2	5	1	6	1
Not specified		2	2	2	2	1	3	1			1	
Private Motor Vehicle	4	7		1	4	3	2	3	3	7	3	5
Red Cross Health Shuttle (Buller)											1	
Nelson					1							1
Helicopter												1
Private Motor Vehicle					1							

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Destination Hospital / Mode of Transfer	2017											
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Christchurch	5	9	9	4	10	5	4	7	4	7	6	4
Ambulance							1		1		1	
Helicopter	4	8	8	3	5		1	1	1	1	4	2
DHB Board Car				1	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	
Pressurised Aircraft					3	2	1	2		1		1
Private Motor Vehicle	1	1	1		1			1	1	2		1
Grey	23	30	18	34	26	24	22	17	17	28	26	14
Ambulance	10	9	7	6	8	6	13	5	9	8	10	4
Helicopter	4	5	4	9	6	9	6	8	4	4	6	7
DHB Board Car	5	8	5	11	8	5	3	2	3	12	4	1
Private Motor Vehicle	4	7	2	8	4	4		2	1	4	6	2
Red Cross Health Shuttle		1										
Nelson	1		2		1					2	1	1
Ambulance										1		
Helicopter	1		1							1	1	1
Private Motor Vehicle			1		1							

Destination Hospital / Mode of Transfer	2018											
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Christchurch	6	5	7	3	2	6	7	2	4	2	6	3
Ambulance		2			1	1				1		
Helicopter	3	3	4			1	1	1	2		5	1
DHB Board Car			1	1		1	2	1	2			
Pressurised Aircraft	2		1	2	1	1	3			1		2
Private Vehicle	1		1			2	1				1	
Christchurch Women's	1											
Pressurised Aircraft	1											
Grey	19	20	29	18	24	20	18	24	22	28	16	19
Ambulance	3	2	5	7	7	5	6	6	2	4	4	3
Helicopter	6	4	9	3	7	6	1	8	13	17	5	8
DHB Board Car	8	12	9	4	7	2	5	5	1	3	4	6
Private Vehicle	2	2	6	4	3	7	6	5	6	4	3	2
Hospice							1					
Helicopter							1					
Nelson						1				1	1	
Helicopter						1				1		
Private Vehicle											1	
St George's								1				
Ambulance								1				

	2019					
Destination Hospital / Mode of Transfer	January	February	March	April	May	June
Christchurch	3	2	1	1	3	8
Aircraft (type not otherwise specified)		1				
Ambulance						1
Helicopter	2	1	1		2	3
DHB Board Car				1	1	1
Pressurised Aircraft						2
Private Motor Vehicle	1					1
Grey	22	17	14	18	24	26
Ambulance	6	2	4	6	10	6
Helicopter	6	7	1	4	5	11
DHB Board Car	6	5	7	3	5	5
Private Motor Vehicle	4	3	2	5	4	4
Nelson	1	1	1			1
Helicopter	1	1	1			1
Wellington					1	
Pressurised Aircraft					1	