



West Coast District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora a Rohe o Tai Poutini

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4 February 2021

9(2)(a)

RE Official information request WCDHB 9510

I refer to your email dated 21 December 2020, requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from West Coast DHB. Specifically:

- 1. How many pieces of art does the DHB own? Art includes any artwork, including drawings, paintings, sculptures, statues, photographs, or any other types of art.**

There are approximately 200 artworks – both original and reproduction copy pieces – that are either owned by the West Coast DHB or held on loan. The artworks are comprised of a wide range of media including various sculptures, oil and water-colour paintings, drawings, prints, photographs, textiles, patchwork, papertole, ceramics, stained glass, and wood and hard stone carvings.

Some of those artworks, which are currently listed on our art holdings register, are currently in the process of being offered for return to the original donors or their families. Included in this are a large number of works donated in 2003 as a result of an “Art in Hospitals” campaign, with many donors having requested and accepted the offer of return of their items.

- 2. Please state what the art is – eg a painting, who the artist is, whether the art was donated or purchased, and the value of the artwork. If a sculpture or statue, what or who does the art depict?**

The nature and subject matter of artworks is widely varied, although most pieces commonly depict representations of scenery (particularly of local and other South Island scenes), nature, children’s subjects, abstraction, and of the cultural heritage of Tangata Whenua.

We do not have a complete art register detailing every piece of art work that is held by the West Coast DHB, so we are unable to supply you with a complete list of each artwork detailing who the specific artist is, or how or when they came into our possession, or their respective values. A number of artworks well predate the establishment of our art holdings register or any corporate knowledge of their receipt. Some artworks have been in our possession since last century (and possibly even earlier) and are not signed by the artist or donor, so the details of their origin are unclear.

With regard to sculptures and statues, the various sculptures that we have include a water feature with a central feature of an uncut piece of pounamu and a natural pounamu touchstone gifted by local iwi, garden art sculptures, a puna wai sculpture, a sculpture titled “Babe in hand” made by a local artist, and a mosaic installation work made and donated by a local Greymouth artist. There are no statues that are owned by, or on loan to, West Coast DHB.

3. If the artwork was purchased, how much did it cost to buy and when was it bought?

West Coast DHB generally does not purchase artwork. The only artworks that have recently been purchased are a series of Māori panel carvings procured for our hospital building and our Whanau House facility located on-site at Te Nikau Grey Hospital and Health Centre. One set of panels was purchased in 2006 and the other series was purchased in 2009. Collectively, these works cost \$5,000 in total.

Artwork is generally always donated, or presented on loan to the DHB, as gifts for the people of our district needing to use our health facilities or otherwise just wanting to help brighten the environment in our various hospital, rural clinics, primary care general practice rooms, and aged residential care facilities that we operate. Many artworks have been donated as gifts of gratitude for services and for care received from staff by the donors, but there have also been other general gifts of artworks from local iwi, DHB staff, local community artists, and local school children across our district. The tradition of gifting art has been long-standing and continued to the present day.

4. What is the combined total value of all of the DHB's art?

As there has been no formal appraisal of the value of artworks held by the West Coast DHB, either on loan or those owned by the DHB, we are unable to provide you with an estimate of their combined total financial value. To the West Coast DHB the real value of the artworks lies in their provenance, in the connection they have to staff, patients and their families, past and present, and to the cultural significance and connexion they hold to local iwi and the wider community we serve.

We are therefore declining a response to this part of the request pursuant to section 18(g) of the Official Information Act, i.e. *"the information requested is not held..."*

5. Where is the artwork housed? Eg, which hospital, building, wing, ward?

Generally, all artworks in our possession have been permanently displayed in public, patient, and staff areas. The artworks are displayed in numerous patient areas across all West Coast DHB sites; indoors, outdoors and in restricted access areas and high care areas (such as specialist mental health). A number of artworks are currently in storage following the migration from the old Grey Base Hospital into the new Te Nikau Grey Hospital and Health Centre building in August 2020. As noted above, the art previously displayed in the old Grey Base Hospital building is currently being offered to return to original donors, donor families and artists, so the future decision regarding display of remaining artworks is yet to be confirmed. A similar process is about to be undertaken at Buller Health in Westport with the upcoming rebuild of the health facility there.

On request, any artwork may be decommissioned and returned to a family member of the original donor at any time.

6. Has the DHB ever donated or loaned any art and if so to who, when, for how long and why?

No donations or loan of any artworks has been undertaken by West Coast DHB.

7. Is the art insured and if so for how much? Has any art ever been stolen and if so was it recovered?

Currently, the artworks are not collectively, or individually, insured by West Coast DHB.

There have been no reported incidences of any artwork being stolen from our facilities, nor any anecdotal knowledge of such occurrences that can be ascertained. We use secure hanging and mounting fastening systems to prevent spontaneous theft for works on display, while the very public nature of areas where the art is displayed combined with security cameras in some key locations assists to discourage potential theft.

8. Has any of the art ever been damaged and repaired and if so when, and how was it damaged?

There has been no reported deliberate or accidental damage to an artwork since records began, nor any anecdotal knowledge of such occurrences that can otherwise be ascertained.

9. Has the DHB ever undertaken an art audit and if so when?

There is an ongoing auditing process of the artworks; particularly with regard to the current process of repatriation of artworks to donors.

10. What is the benefit to patients of the artwork?

“Fine art is good medicine”. Hospitals around the world for decades have viewed art as having a beneficial impact on health, healing and general happiness. Specifically, the presence of appropriate artwork has been credited with: relieving anxiety and fear, decreasing the perception of pain, de-escalating anger, providing positive distraction and relaxation and sense of the familiar, providing a link with cultural heritage, a moderating influence on bereavement loss, a trigger for happy memories and greater empathy between staff, patients and families.

I trust 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; or Freephone 0800 802 602.

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



Ralph La Salle
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Planning, Funding & Decision Support