



West Coast District Health Board

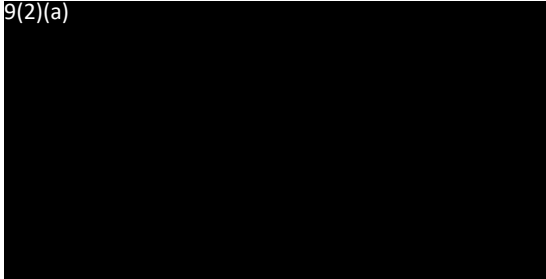
Te Poari Hauora a Rohe o Tai Poutini

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10 December 2021

9(2)(a)



RE Official Information Act request WCDHB 9633

I refer to your email dated 12 November 2021 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from West Coast DHB regarding staffing details at Buller Health for the year to 30 June 2022

Buller Health includes both the general practice (Buller Medical) as well as the hospital service, and has doctors covering both areas. The doctors' employment with us is not split or differentiated between general practice and hospital systems. 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, 2021, and how many FTE positions does that equate to?*

During the year to 30 June 2021, there were 38 individuals who served as locum doctors at Buller Health in the general practice and the hospital services (as defined above). Locum cover equated to an average of 3.2 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 2021, there were 5 individuals who served as permanent GP doctors at Buller Health in the general practice and the hospital services (as defined above). This equated to an average of 2.82 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) permanent doctors over the 12-month period. A training registrar (doctor) position and a nurse practitioner contributed a further 0.15 and 0.33 FTE respectively.

In addition, there were five individuals Rural Health Medicine Specialists (RHM) based in Te Nikau, provided support during the year at an average of 0.10 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) in the year to 30 June 2021 was \$1,565,138. This is inclusive of service fees \$1,289,883, agency fees \$129,421 and other expenses \$145,834.

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 nine months in the year ended 30 June 2021.

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 2021, excluding RMO Registrars, was \$876,939 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, 2021, 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 24 individual practice nurses employed for various periods of service at the Buller Medical general practice at Westport only, as counted if employed at any time during the year to 30 June 2021. This equated to an annualised 7.15 FTE employed during the year.

7. What was the cost of practice nurses for the year to June 30, 2021?

As defined in Question 6 above, the cost of the practice nurses employed at Buller Medical in Westport during the year to 30 June 2021 was \$678,820. This is inclusive of leave provisions and other associated employment costs.

8. What were the commuting costs, accommodation costs and other expenses for Buller Health's clinical director, Dr Murray Wiggins, during the year?

9. On average, how many days a week does Dr Wiggins work remotely for Buller Health and how many days a week is he on site in Westport?

10. Where is Dr Wiggins based?

Information about the costs and expenses relating to Dr Wiggins are included within the financial data above. We decline to provide additional details relating to individual staff member conditions of employment and private residence, such as requested in Questions 8, 9 and 10 above, 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"*.

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; 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tracey Maisey', with a stylized, flowing script.

Tracey Maisey
Executive Director
Planning, Funding & Decision Support