

1 December 2022

DOIA22/256

9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe 9(2)(a)

I refer to your request received on 8 November 2022, which has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), for the following information:

1. ***How many days of annual leave or paid time off (such as departmental holidays or supplementary leave), in excess of the statutory four weeks leave, do your staff receive?***

While most employees receive four weeks annual leave each year, some employees receive 4.4 weeks annual leave. The additional entitlement is provided in the Ministry's collective employment agreement on completion of five years' service, or in some individual employment agreements.

In addition to annual leave, all employees receive three paid days holiday each year between Christmas and New Year. This is provided in their employment agreements.

2. ***When was the amount of annual leave or paid time off (in excess of four weeks) allocated to each employee last increased?***

The above arrangements have been in place for many years, appearing in the Ministry's employment agreements from at least 2008.

The above annual leave entitlement was introduced soon after the statutory entitlement increased to four weeks in 2007.

The above entitlement to additional holidays at Christmas appears to have been in place since the Ministry was established in 1991 and is based on a former long-standing entitlement across the Public Service.

3. ***If any additional leave or paid time off entitlements have been given in the past two years, please provide a reason as to why.***

Paid special leave for COVID-related reasons has been provided in the past two years in some circumstances where sick leave was unavailable or inappropriate, in terms of guidance issued by the Public Service Commission.

No other new entitlements to paid leave have been provided in the last two years.

4. ***Please indicate whether the above additional entitlements are temporary or will continue next year and/or for the foreseeable future.***

The entitlements referred to in question one relating to additional annual leave and paid holidays at Christmas will continue for the foreseeable future.

The paid special leave for COVID-related reasons was a temporary arrangement.

5. If different employees receive different entitlements to additional leave, please indicate the number of staff receiving each entitlement. E.g., 5 Days - XX employees, 6 days - XX employees, 7 Days XX employees

155 employees are entitled to annual leave of 4 weeks.

34 employees are entitled to annual leave of 4.4 weeks.

189 employees are entitled to additional paid holidays at Christmas.

Eight employees have received a total of 35 days paid special leave in the last two years. This may not all be for COVID-related reasons, as our system does not record the reason for special leave.

6. What is the total annual cost of providing leave entitlements beyond the four weeks required by law?

The annual cost of annual leave above four weeks is approximately \$29,000.

The annual cost of additional paid holidays at Christmas is approximately \$221,000.

7. If there have been additional entitlements in the past two years (e.g., an extra paid day off over the Christmas break), what is the estimated cost of providing this?

The cost of paid special leave in the last two years is approximately \$12,000. This may not all be for COVID-related reasons, as our system does not record the reason for special leave.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

9(2)(a)

Matthew Oliver
Pou Mataaho o Te Iho
Deputy Chief Executive, Organisational Performance