

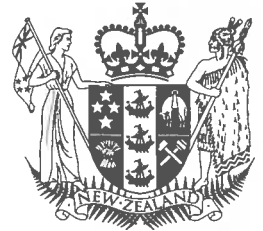
Hon Tracey Martin

Minister for Children

Minister of Internal Affairs

Minister for Seniors

Associate Minister of Education



24 JUL 2019

Daniel

FYI Requestor

fyi-request-10552-

f2251f4e@requests.fyi.org.nz

Thank you for your email of 17 June 2019 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

- *“What reports, advice or information in any form have you received regarding the creation of the Volunteer Firefighter to be [sic] paid for training.*
- *Furthermore, what steps have you taken to minimise the risk of improper people volunteering for FENZ, who only seek money?”.*

I have interpreted the first part of your request to be for formal briefings and reports relating to the creation of the Volunteer Fire Fighter Reward and Recognition Initiative. A single document is identified as in-scope for this part of the request.

I have attached a copy of the document as **Appendix A**. Some information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, where it is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons. This includes phone numbers of some officials from FENZ.

As Minister of Internal Affairs, I am not responsible for the day to day operational decisions of Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ). However, in response to the second part of your request, I am advised that FENZ maintains a strict application process for volunteers. The process involves an application, initial interview, medical checks, security checks, nomination and then acceptance as a member of the volunteer brigade they are hoping to join. The recently released Fire and Emergency New Zealand Volunteerism Strategy highlights the need to provide relevant and meaningful recognition for volunteers, their families and whānau, and employers. All contribute hugely to keeping our communities safe.

I am also advised that FENZ has engaged with volunteers to prioritise the best ways to continue improving volunteer support and ensure sustainable volunteerism. The focus of the volunteer recognition initiatives strategies is on reimbursing costs rather than making payments to volunteers. Fire and Emergency New Zealand views that this approach, coupled with the stringent volunteer application process, reduces the risk of improper volunteering.

As required by section 9(1) of the Act, I have considered whether the grounds for withholding information from the documents provided with this response are outweighed by other considerations which would make it desirable, in the public interest, to make that information available. In these instances, I do not consider that to be the case.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the Act, to make a complaint to an Ombudsman and seek an investigation and review of my response to your request. The contact address is: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington. 6143. Alternatively, you can phone 0800 802 602 or email info@ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Tracey Martin', written over the typed name and title.

Hon Tracey Martin
Minister of Internal Affairs

Appendix A: Documents for release