

05 May 2020

David Lawson

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Tēnā koe David

Your Official Information Act request, reference: GOV-004097

Thank you for your email of 5 March 2020, requesting information about ACC's Remote Claims Unit and Te Ara Tika (formerly the Wellington Central Branch) under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

As you will know, we extended the timeframe for making a decision on your request to 5 May 2020. We have now completed our work on your request, and our responses to each of your questions are provided below.

Responses to your official information requests

1. *Please confirm whether the Client Service Leader tasked with overseeing the Remote Claims Unit holds the delegated authority over the same 3 Principal Advisors that provide the advice to the WCB/Te Ara Tika Team Leader, and the 6 Recovery Partners within this team.*
2. *If the answer to OIA Request 1 above is no, please confirm whether the Client Service Leader and the team that assist the claimants in the Remote Claims Unit in their recoveries has delegated authority, and ongoing access to involve a Principal Advisor on complex matters.*

The information requested in these two questions would identify the Client Service Leader responsible for the Remote Claims Unit, which in turn would likely lead to that person being identified.

The Remote Claims Unit is a specialist team which manages clients identified as posing an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of ACC staff and providers. To ensure the safety of the staff in the Remote Claims Unit, they work under a pseudonym and the Unit's location is not made public. In line with this, ACC does not disclose any information about the Remote Claims Unit or its staff that could lead to its staff being identified.

In consideration of this, we are withholding the information requested in questions 1 and 2 in full under section 6(d) of the Act, releasing the information would likely endanger the safety of a person.

3. *(i) Please confirm how many Principal Advisors, Team Leaders and Recovery Partners are allocated to serve the ACC's clients in the Remote Claims Unit?*

There are no Principal Advisors allocated to the Remote Claims unit, there are three Principal Advisors who provide advice for all of Client Service Delivery and across ACC.

Staff across all of ACC provide advice, support and assistance in relation to individual ACC claims, including claims managed in the Remote Claims Unit. We would not be able to identify the number of staff who have assisted, served, or have been had some involvement with a Remote Claim, without searching through individual claims. We are therefore refusing this question under section 18(f) of the Act as it cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

- (ii) *Do ACC's remote claims unit share Policy Advisors, Team Leaders and Recover Partners with any other region or team?*

We note that this question asks about 'Policy Advisors' in the Remote Claims Unit, however, we have interpreted this to mean Principal Advisors. Please refer to our answer for Question 3.

We note that your question seeks information about the working arrangements of the Remote Claims Unit staff, including if they work in other teams and if they move between regions. We consider that details about how and where these staff work could potentially be used to make inferences about individuals working in the Remote Claims Unit and its location. This, in turn, would make the identification of these staff more likely. Due to this, we are withholding the information related to this part of your request in full under section 6(d) of the Act, as it would endanger a person's safety.

4. *For each of the years ending 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 please provide the following information;*

- (i) *The number of full time equivalent employees that serviced ACC's clients held in ACC's Remote Claims Unit, on an annual basis.*

Staff across all of ACC provide advice, support and assistance in relation to individual ACC claims, including those managed in the Remote Claims Unit. As staff do not record the time spent on different claims, we do not have an FTE figure for all staff who have provided services to Remote Claims Unit clients. Accordingly, we are refusing part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information does not exist.

- (ii) *The total number of combined hours that ACC's remote Claims Unit Staff invested in helping out all of ACC's clients held in the Remote Claims Unit through each year?*

We do not collect information about staff working hours to the level of detail you are seeking. Accordingly, we are refusing this part of your request as the information does not exist. This decision is made under section 18(e) of the Act.

We can advise that the Remote Claims Unit operates during normal business hours (8:30am – 5:00pm) on every working day of the year, including between Christmas and the New Year.

- (iii) *Please provide a break down of the average number of hours an ACC Remote Claims Unit client's would receive each in case management contact to promote their recovery for each of the following time intervals;*
a. quarterly,
b. monthly, and
c. weekly.

We do not collect data about the number of hours of contact time that each client receives. We are therefore refusing this part of your request as the information does not exist. This decision is made under section 18(e) of the Act.

- (iv) *The total amount in dollar terms restricted to ACC remote claims staff's remuneration for providing services to remote claims unit clients (please exclude any redundancy payments or severance payments that may skew results) for each year.*

The tables below show the salary bands for Remote Claims Unit staff.

Table 1: Base salary for Case Manager, financial years 2014/15 to 2018/19

	Salary band range (85% to 120%)		
	85%	100%	120%
2014/15	\$63,292	\$74,461	\$89,352
2015/16	\$64,228	\$75,563	\$90,676
2016/17	\$64,520	\$75,906	\$91,087
2017/18	\$66,357	\$78,067	\$93,680
2018/19	\$67,087	\$78,926	\$94,711

Table 2: Base salary for Manager, financial years 2014/15 to 2018/19

	Salary band range (85% to 120%)		
	85%	100%	120%
2014/15	\$103,512	\$121,779	\$146,135
2015/16	\$105,680	\$124,329	\$149,195
2016/17	\$105,943	\$124,639	\$149,567
2017/18	\$109,060	\$128,306	\$153,967
2018/19	\$111,241	\$130,872	\$157,046

5. For each of the years ending 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 please provide the following information;

- (i) The number of ACC Remote Claim's Unit clients that made no contact with the ACC remote claims team within that year,
- (ii) The number of ACC Remote Claim's Unit clients that the ACC remote claims team made no contact within each year.
- (iii) The combined total number of contacts made to ACC remote claims unit staff by ACC's remote claims unit client's, together with a further breakdown of how many of these contacts were;
 - Face to face
 - By way of letter
 - By way of email
 - By way of fax
 - By way of phone
- (iv) The combined total number of contacts made to ACC remote claims unit client's to ACC's remote claims unit staff, together with a further breakdown of how many of these contacts were;
 - Face to face
 - By way of letter
 - By way of email
 - By way of fax
 - By way of phone

ACC records contacts with clients and other relevant parties on individual claim files. However, we do not record the parties to each contact in a collatable way. This information could only be determined by manually reviewing each contact in every active claim.

It would not be possible to provide information for this request without substantial collation and research, and we do not consider that fixing a charge or extending the time limit would enable us to

grant this request within our resources and carry out our functions. Accordingly, we refuse this request under section 18(f) of the Act.

6. A. Do staff within the remote claims unit use pseudonym's and not their real names?

Yes.

B. Do staff within Wellington Central Branch/Te Ara Tika use pseudonym's and not their real names?

No.

If so how is an RCU or WCB client able to request from an ACC employee under the provisions of the Official Information Act clarification about the ACC's employees decision making regarding covers and entitlements requested from the so Corporation?

I understand that this question relates to section 23 of the Act, which provides people the right of access to reasons for a decision affecting that person. This right applies to all people (including clients managed in the Remote Claims Unit) as defined under subsection (2) of that section.

As with any client of ACC, a Remote Claims client can make a request to ACC for a written statement about a decision or recommendation that affected them. We consider that having a Recovery Partner who works under a pseudonym would not inhibit the release of information about reasons for decisions, as this information is held on individual claim files.

Questions or concerns about our response

If you have any questions, you can email me at GovernmentServices@acc.co.nz.

If you are not happy with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Sasha Wood
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