

9 July 2020

Gerard Byrne  
[fyi-request-13109-de472908@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-13109-de472908@requests.fyi.org.nz)

REF: OIA-6791

Dear Gerard

**Request made under the Official Information Act 1982**

Thank you for your email of 18 June 2020 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

*can you please supply a copy of NZTA internal policy about drinking alcohol at NZTA events and can you please provide the details of all alcohol expenditure for NZTA in 2019 financial year.*

An excerpt from the Sensitive Expenditure Policy (August 2019) relating to alcohol is outlined in the below table.

<b>Catering for meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport Agency funds are not to be used for the purchase of alcohol.</li> </ul>
<b>Farewells and retirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport Agency funds are not to be used for the purchase of alcohol.</li> </ul>
<b>Functions and events</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Transport Agency will subsidise each staff member to attend one social club Christmas party.</li> <li>• Other team events, including Christmas lunches, should be self-funded, not paid for by the Transport Agency.</li> <li>• If alcohol is consumed during the working day, employees should not return to work and any additional time should be made up or taken as annual leave.</li> </ul>
<b>Hospitality and entertainment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When hosting guests or having meetings off-site with people who are official representatives of their organisations, there may be times when it is appropriate for Transport Agency staff to pay for food or drink.</li> <li>• Costs should be reasonable - generally no more than \$15 per head.</li> <li>• Alcoholic drinks must not be charged to the Transport Agency without prior approval from the Chief Executive, and only in circumstances where the Transport Agency has approved hospitality for external stakeholders.</li> </ul>

<b>Work-related travel expenditure</b>	<b>Meals while travelling within New Zealand</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When travelling for work it may be appropriate for the Transport Agency to pay for the reasonable costs of meals and refreshments. For an extended working day (eg more than 10 hours away) it may be appropriate for the Transport Agency to pay for the reasonable costs of an evening meal. When travelling overnight it may be appropriate for the Transport Agency to pay for the cost of the evening meal and breakfast/lunch the next day. Travellers should normally restrict the costs of meals and refreshments to:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ up to \$25 for breakfast</li><li>○ up to \$20 for lunch</li><li>○ up to \$50 for dinner.</li></ul></li><li>• Any alcoholic drinks must be paid for by the traveller and are not to be charged to the Transport Agency.</li></ul> <b>In-room entertainment and mini bars</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In-room entertainment such as videos and DVDs and items purchased from mini bars are considered personal expenditure and must not be charged to the Transport Agency and will not be reimbursed.</li></ul>
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I refuse your request for the details of all alcohol expenditure for Waka Kotahi in the 2019 financial year under section 18(f) of the Act as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

Waka Kotahi's general ledger transactions do not have a specific code for alcohol – these transactions are showing as "accommodation and meals". The expenses are paid through either APX travel, Mastercard, or by submitting a staff expenses claim. To identify whether any transaction included alcohol would require Waka Kotahi to identify each employee's transactions for accommodation and meals, and then find and check each saved receipt for those transactions. We consider that this would place an unreasonable administrative burden on Waka Kotahi.

Under section 28 of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision to refuse some information. The contact details for the Ombudsman can be located online at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz).

If you would like to discuss this reply with Waka Kotahi, please contact Katrina Leather, Manager Employment Relations, by email to [katrina.leather@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:katrina.leather@nzta.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely



**Chris Lokum**  
General Manager People