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22 December 2020

H Barry

By email: fyi-request-14005-4515aa8a@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear H Barry

Information Request – Alternative Personal Protective Equipment

Request for information

I refer to your official information request dated 19 October 2020 asking for information relating to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

On 1 July 2017, 40 organisations came together to form Fire and Emergency New Zealand. Prior to that merger, each organisation had its own different uniform requirements. We have been working to ensure the same standards apply to all PPE across our new unified organisation, developing PPE that is safe, practical, cost-effective and reflects the changing needs of the communities we serve.

Please find official information relating to your requests set out under each of your individual questions below:

1) Who does Fire and Emergency have supply agreements with for the supply of PPE? How long have these agreements been in place?

Fire and Emergency has agreements for the supply of PPE with Work Wear Group Limited. The agreement began in 2002, between the former New Zealand Fire Service and Work Wear Group limited. The agreement was adopted by Fire and Emergency New Zealand when the organisation was formed in 2017.

2) How much has Fire and Emergency spent on PPE over the last two years, by category of purchase.

Please see the following table, showing the cost of PPE to Fire and Emergency over the last two years. The costs have been broken down by financial year, into category of equipment as requested. We have included laundry and dry-cleaning costs associated with PPE in these figures. You will note

in the table that PPE is described as level 1,2 and 3. The different levels are used when responding to different kinds of incidents, Level 1 is wildfire and rescue PPE, Level 2 is structural firefighting PPE and Level 3 PPE is a splash suit that offers a high level of protection against a wide range of chemical liquids and particulates.

PPE Category	2018/19	2019/20
Wildfire / Operational Support PPE	841,169	799,128
Helmets	679,837	578,178
Boots	1,196,692	1,152,388
Gloves	794,049	790,358
Protective Clothing Other	2,470,778	2,035,483
Splash Suits - Level 3	106,631	49,326
Maintenance Contract Level 2 Uniforms	1,836,928	2,118,930
Level 2 – Personal Protective Equipment	1,786,528	2,709,868
Total	9,712,612	10,233,659

3) *Over the last two years, how many career fire fighters have requested or required alternative PPE to the standard issue supplied by Fire and Emergency?*

4) *Over the last two years, how many volunteer fire fighters have requested or required alternative PPE to the standard issue supplied by Fire and Emergency?*

5) *Of the requests in 3) and 4) above, how many have been approved and alternative PPE supplied?*

We are declining this part of your request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), due to the substantial amount of work that would be required to research and collate responses to questions 3, 4 and 5. Particularly:

- It is not uncommon for alternate PPE to be requested and supplied to FENZ personnel (for example ensuring helmets fit properly and meeting individual requirements for footwear).
- No centralised register of alternate PPE requests, requirements and / or supplies exists.
- Information about individual requests for alternative PPE requests would need to be manually obtained from individual brigades.
- To research and collate the relevant information, each of Fire and Emergency's Area Managers would need to contact each of the 653 Career and Volunteer fire brigades from around New Zealand.
- Those brigades may or may not have clear records of the relevant information. Those brigades may need to search through documents capturing the information, such as purchase records, emails and / or text messages.
- That resulting information would need to be processed and collated by Fire and Emergency's *National Advisor Operations, Uniform and PPE*, who has specialist operational and commercial PPE knowledge. That would divert that person's time from their core role, which would have a substantial and unreasonable impact on our standard operations.

We have considered whether charging or extending the timeframe for responding to your request would help, as required by section 18A of the OIA. However, we do not believe either avenue would change our decision.

While we have been unable to provide you with the information you requested in questions 3 – 5 above, it may be that we can provide you with alternate information that is useful for your queries. We would be happy to discuss this with you. If there is more specific information you are interested in receiving, please let us know.

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.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sid Wellik', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Sid Wellik
Acting Deputy Chief Executive, Office of the Chief Executive

