



13 August 2024

Catherine WGJ

By email: fyi-request-27501-d329e206@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Catherine

### **Official information request regarding He Whenua Taurikura**

I refer to your request for information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) that was transferred to Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington on 16 July 2024:

#### *"1. Staff at HWT\*\**

- 1.1 A recent media article indicated that there are five staff members at the HWT. Could you please provide a breakdown of these roles and their corresponding annual salary bands (e.g., \$50,000-\$60,000)?*
- 1.2 Do any of the staff currently hold Terrorism, Defence or Security qualifications?*
- 1.3 How were these staff positions filled? Was there a formal application process? If so, when and where was this process advertised?*
- 1.4 Are these staff members solely employed by Victoria University, or are they affiliated with other universities as well?*
- 1.5 Are the students all on site ? if not how often are they engaged with ?*
- 1.6 Given that HWT is described as a scholarship management entity, could you please explain the rationale behind having five staff members?*
- 1.7 Are staff conducting research that is funded by HWT*

#### *3. Scholarship Awards\*\**

- 3.1 Please provide details on the number of scholarships awarded to students each year, and the universities associated with these scholarship recipients (excluding personal names). HWT only have Masters and PHD advertised on the website. Are there others?*

#### *4. Scholarship Application Screening\*\**

- 4.1 Could you clarify the process for screening scholarship applications? Are applications screened before being presented to the board, or does the board conduct its own screening?*
- 4.2 is there a prioritisation of candidates for any reason ? characteristics - gender, race, culture for example ?*

4.3 *If applications are pre-screened, who performs this screening? Is this process subject to peer review or external audit? For example how is bias managed.*

5. *HWT Associates\*\**

5.1 *Please outline the recruitment process for HWT associates.*

5.2 *Was there a formal application process in place? If so, were these applications subject to peer review or audit? when were they advertised?*

5.3 *Do the HWT associates sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) as part of their involvement?*

5.4 *Are the associates financially compensated for their contributions? If so, could you elaborate on the associated costs?*

6. *PCVE Qualifications\*\**

6.1 *Do any of the HWT staff or associates possess qualifications in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE)?*

6.2 *If not have HWT engaged with someone who is qualified ?*

7. *Involvement of Postdoctoral People (Emma Rakete and Kyle Matthews) and Costs and Overseas Conferences and Travel\*\**

7.1 *Does HWT engage with researchers beyond PhD students, such as recent graduates like Ms. Emma Rakete and Mr. Kyle Matthews? If so, could you clarify the nature of their involvement with the program?*

7.2 *Were these opportunities for Ms. Rakete and Mr. Matthews publicly advertised?*

7.3 *Are there are post doctoral researchers with HWT?*

7.4 *Does HWT fund overseas conferences and travel for its staff, associates, or collaborating researchers? If so, could you provide details on the associated costs, the expected outputs or deliverables resulting from this travel/research/projects, and the selection process for such funding?*

8. *Security Oversight*

8.1 *Could you describe the oversight mechanisms in place to ensure HWT's research focus aligns with or is at least learning about national security priorities? terrorism?*

8.2 *Do any staff have experience or qualifications in Security, Defence or Policing ?*

8.3 *Are the students provided access to security scholars/experts?*

8.4 *Is HWT funding the 'Crime Media Culture journal? if so why ?"*

As per our previous response, we have interpreted your questions as they relate to the He Whenua Taurikura National Centre of academic and research activity (the Centre) as the University does not hold information regarding the He Whenua Taurikura - National Centre of Research Excellence Trust (the Trust). I have numbered your questions for ease of reference.

1.1 *A recent media article indicated that there are five staff members at the HWT. Could you please provide a breakdown of these roles and their corresponding annual salary bands (e.g., \$50,000-\$60,000)?*

Roles at the Centre include Director, Project Manager, Research Fellow (x 2), Research Assistant, and Centre Manager. Salary bands for the Director, Research Fellows and Research Assistant are as per the [VUW Academic Staff Collective Agreement](#). Salary bands for the Project Manager and Centre Manager are as per the [VUW General Staff Collective Agreement](#).

*1.2 Do any of the staff currently hold Terrorism, Defence or Security qualifications?*

These are topics for investigation that can be addressed across a range of disciplinary areas. All staff employed by the University are suitably qualified for academic roles.

*1.3 How were these staff positions filled? Was there a formal application process? If so, when and where was this process advertised?*

The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet will respond to this aspect of your request in respect of the Co-Director positions. Research fellow and assistant appointments were made on the recommendation of the co-Directors and were not advertised. Other appointments followed Victoria University recruitment processes. In these cases an internal appointments process was followed which utilised internal advertising on the University's intranet and University-wide communications.

*1.4 Are these staff members solely employed by Victoria University, or are they affiliated with other universities as well?*

The University acts as the employer for the purposes of Centre activities.

*1.5 Are the students all on site ? if not how often are they engaged with ?*

Scholarship students are enrolled in universities across the country and are subject to the standard supervision protocols of those universities. He Whenua Taurikura runs a support and mentoring programme with monthly meetings for students.

*1.6 Given that HWT is described as a scholarship management entity, could you please explain the rationale behind having five staff members?*

As per our response to your previous request, He Whenua Taurikura - National Centre of Research Excellence Trust (the Trust) is separate to the He Whenua Taurikura National Centre of academic and research activity (the Centre). The five staff members referred to are employed by the University on behalf of the Centre to facilitate and carry out research on preventing and countering violent extremism. The award of student scholarships is only one part of its operations.

*1.7 Are staff conducting research that is funded by HWT*

Yes. Two postdoctoral research fellows are employed to work exclusively on PVET research

*3.1 Please provide details on the number of scholarships awarded to students each year, and the universities associated with these scholarship recipients (excluding personal names). HWT only have Masters and PHD advertised on the website. Are there others?*

HWT awards scholarships to students doing full length Masters or PhD study by thesis. In total 24 scholarships, for both Master's and PhD, have been awarded between 2022 and 2024 to students from the University of Canterbury, Massey University, University of

Auckland, University of Otago, Victoria University and Waikato University 24 scholarships awarded total (VUW x 7, Massey x 8, Waikato x 1, Otago x 2, Auckland x 5, Canterbury x 1). Scholarships by year are as follows:

2022 - 11 scholarships awarded

2023 - 4 scholarships awarded

2024 - 9 scholarships awarded

*4.1 Could you clarify the process for screening scholarship applications? Are applications screened before being presented to the board, or does the board conduct its own screening?*

All scholarship applications are assessed by the Centre's Research Committee. The names of Research Committee members and their university affiliations are listed on the HWT website. The Trust Board approves funding for scholarships but is not involved with the assessment of applications or the individual allocations of the scholarships.

*4.2 is there a prioritisation of candidates for any reason ? characteristics - gender, race, culture for example ?*

Scholarship applications are assessed solely on academic merit. There is no prioritisation of candidates for any other reason.

*4.3 If applications are pre-screened, who performs this screening? Is this process subject to peer review or external audit? For example how is bias managed.*

Applications are assessed by the Centre Manager to ensure eligibility in accordance with the criteria outlined on the HWT website. All eligible applications are placed before the committee..

*5.1 Please outline the recruitment process for HWT associates.*

*5.2 Was there a formal application process in place? If so, were these applications subject to peer review or audit? when were they advertised?*

The first cohort of research associates were invited to join the research community around the Centre in 2022 at the invitation of co-Directors Professor Paul Spoonley and Joanna Kidman. There was no formal application process.

*5.3 Do the HWT associates sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) as part of their involvement?*

No.

*5.4 Are the associates financially compensated for their contributions? If so, could you elaborate on the associated costs?*

No.

*6.1 Do any of the HWT staff or associates possess qualifications in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE)?*

*6.2 If not have HWT engaged with someone who is qualified ?*

These are topics for investigation that can be addressed across a range of disciplinary areas. All staff and research associates have suitable academic qualifications.

*7.1 Does HWT engage with researchers beyond PhD students, such as recent graduates like Ms. Emma Rakete and Mr. Kyle Matthews? If so, could you clarify the nature of their involvement with the program?*

HWT engages with a network of active researchers around Aotearoa to undertake research regarding preventing and countering violent extremism. A list of research associates is available on the HWT website.

*7.2 Were these opportunities for Ms. Rakete and Mr. Matthews publicly advertised?*

As per above, research fellows were made by appointment on the recommendation of the co-Directors. As such these positions were not advertised.

*7.3 Are there any post doctoral researchers with HWT?*

Yes.

*7.4 Does HWT fund overseas conferences and travel for its staff, associates, or collaborating researchers? If so, could you provide details on the associated costs, the expected outputs or deliverables resulting from this travel/research/projects, and the selection process for such funding?*

As is common practice, the Centre provides research fellows with a small research budget, which may be used for attendance at scholarly conferences, fieldwork costs, or other research-related activities, such as hiring research assistants, transcribers. The fellows are currently collecting data, conducting literature reviews, presenting findings at scholarly conferences, engaging in data analysis, doing scholarly presentations of their work. As well, they are writing for academic publications and will shortly begin preparing policy briefs. To date there have been two international trips taken with a total cost (to date) of \$12,500.69.

*8.1 Could you describe the oversight mechanisms in place to ensure HWT's research focus aligns with or is at least learning about national security priorities? terrorism?*

The HWT Board has direct oversight of these matters and all work conducted at the Centre is aligned with Board expectations and university processes and practice with regard to contractual obligations. There are quarterly meetings of the Board at which the Centre reports both its activities and its future plans.

*8.2 Do any staff have experience or qualifications in Security, Defence or Policing?*

These are topics for investigation that can be addressed across a range of disciplinary areas. All staff employed by the university are suitably qualified for academic roles. It should be noted that the Centre's brief is wider than experience in security, defence or policing and includes scholarly expertise in social cohesion research, peace, conflict and War studies (including military studies) and an understanding of political movements in Aotearoa. The funder, the HWT Board and Victoria University have approved the qualifications, experience and knowledge that staff bring to bear on research at the Centre.

*8.3 Are the students provided access to security scholars/experts?*

Yes. Scholarship students are assigned suitably qualified academic supervisors in the universities where they are enrolled.

*8.4 Is HWT funding the 'Crime Media Culture journal? if so why?*

The Centre provided funding for a research assistant on a small fixed term contract to assist the joint editor of the Special Issue to collate responses from prospective contributors to the Special Issue and develop a brief overview of the literature.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of the decisions made regarding this request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact me at [oiarequests@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:oiarequests@vuw.ac.nz).

Ngā mihi nui

Blair Doherty  
Senior Advisor, Official Information and Privacy  
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**Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington**