



27 September 2024

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Tēnā koe Robert

Your Official Information Act request OIA 2425 - 0204

I write regarding your Official Information Act (the Act) request, which was received by the Department of Internal Affairs (the Department) on 1 September 2024.

You have requested:

- *Information that outlines the total number of personal grievances raised by DIA staff in the last 5 years.*
- *Information that outlines the number of claims made by staff relating to bullying and harassment in the last 5 years*
- *Information that outlines the number of claims of internal complaints raised in respect of recent restructures.*
- *Information that outlines the amount of money spent on external lawyers in respect of employment disputes between DIA and staff in the last 5 years*
- *Information that specifies how many times (in the last 5 years) employment dispute related funds were able to be placed under another government expenditure category (such as training, development, mental health/sickness support.*
- *Information that outlines the number of people being placed on 'special paid leave' or similar in the last 5 years*
- *Information that outlines the reason staff members have been placed on special paid leave and information that specifies the length of time those individuals remained on leave/or if they are still on leave, the reason why and the length of time the Department expects them to remain on leave.*

Response to your request

Please find below the response to your request.

Q1. *Information that outlines the total number of personal grievances raised by DIA staff in the last 5 years.*

The total number of personal grievances raised by employees of the Department in the last five years is provided in the table below:

Year ending 30 June	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Personal grievances raised	1	3	8	9	13

Q2. *Information that outlines the number of claims made by staff relating to bullying and harassment in the last 5 years*

The number of issues raised by employees relating to bullying and harassment in the last five years is provided in the table below:

Year ending 30 June	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Number of bullying or harassment claims	2	0	4	6	8

Q3. *Information that outlines the number of claims of internal complaints raised in respect of recent restructures.*

There have been no internal complaints raised in respect of recent restructures.

Q4. *Information that outlines the amount of money spent on external lawyers in respect of employment disputes between DIA and staff in the last 5 years*

The costs for external lawyers in respect of employment issues are paid for within branches. Whether an external lawyer is used is determined by the branch, the manager responsible for managing the issue, advice from Human Resources and the seriousness of the issue raised.

There is no central record kept of when external lawyers' advice is requested, and the cost associated with this.

Therefore, I am declining this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act as the information requested does not exist.

Q5. *Information that specifies how many times (in the last 5 years) employment dispute related funds were able to placed under another government expenditure category (such as training, development, mental health/sickness support).*

The costs related to employment issues are paid for within branches. The manager responsible for managing the issue determines which general ledger code the costs are coded to. There is no central record of general ledger codes used for costs related to employment issues.

Therefore, I am declining this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act as the information requested does not exist.

Q6. *Information that outlines the number of people being placed on 'special paid leave' or similar in the last 5 years*

The number of employees who received special paid leave or similar in the last five years is provided in the table below:

Year ending 30 June	Number of people taking special paid leave
2024	220
2023	386
2022	778
2021	150
2020	354

Please note the majority of special paid leave from 2020 to 2023 was for COVID related reasons due to the lockdowns and other government isolation requirements.

The number in 2021 appears to be an outlier and could be incorrect. The Department has tried to verify the integrity of the information from the HR and payroll system in multiple ways but was unsuccessful. It is likely that this information is incorrect, and that this data underestimates the number of people taking special leave in 2021.

Q7. *Information that outlines the reason staff members have been placed on special paid leave and information that specifies the length of time those individuals remained on leave/or if they are still on leave, the reason why and the length of time the Department expects them to remain on leave.*

Employees may choose from the following options for special paid leave:

- Cultural leave
- Election leave
- Jury leave
- Special leave
- Special sick leave
- Study leave
- Union leave
- Other paid leave.

In addition, from 2020 to July 2024 employees could choose COVID19 as a special paid leave option.

The average length of time employees remained on special paid leave was:

Year ending 30 June:	Average length of special leave
2024	27.3 hours (circa 3.4 days)
2023	23.7 hours (circa 2.9 days)
2022	2.2 days

Year ending 30 June:	Average length of special leave
2021	2.0 days
2020	2.8 days

Note: The Department changed its payroll system in June 2022. This changed the recording of paid special leave from days to hours. The standard working day at the Department is eight hours.

Information and guidance on special paid leave is provided to managers and employees through the Department’s Leave policy and Leave guide. Extracts of the special paid leave sections from these documents are attached as Appendix 1.

We intend to publish our response to your request on www.dia.govt.nz. This letter, with your personal details removed, will be published in its entirety. Publishing responses increases the availability of information to the public and is consistent with the Act’s purpose of enabling more effective participation in the making and administration of laws and policies and promoting the accountability of Ministers and officials.

If you have any feedback or questions about the Department’s response, please let us know at OIA@DIA.govt.nz. If you have any concerns with the information in this response, you have a right to request an investigation and review by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Act. Information on how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa



Simon George
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