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Ref: 16666

Mark Grayson  
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Tēnā koe Mark

Thank you for your request of 25 December 2024, to Fire and Emergency New Zealand requesting information in relation to a fire in Huntly on 9 November 2024, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

In responding to your previous request, you advised that you do not require the names or contact details of our staff or volunteers. In line with this, where these appear in the attached appendices, they have been labelled as *out of scope*. We copy and respond to each aspect of your request below.

1. Referring to your reply to point 3, "we have decided to withhold the recordings of all 111 calls in full under section 9(2)(ba)(i) of the OIA".
  - Can you please provide a transcript of the 111 calls relating to this incident, in a similar format as the transcript provided of the radio messages?

As we advised in our letter dated 13 December 2024, we consider emergency calls received by Fire and Emergency to be subject to a high obligation of confidence. However, it is not just recordings of their voices we consider to be subject to this obligation, it is the information they provide as well. We consider that there would be a chilling effect if callers were aware that transcripts of their phone calls may be made public without their consent. Callers may be less forthcoming with the information they provide to Fire and Emergency or may simply choose not to call.

For this reason, we have decided to withhold the requested transcripts of any 111 calls in full under section 9(2)(ba)(i) of the OIA, to protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence, where the making available of the information would be likely to prejudice the supply of similar information, or information from the same OIA source, and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied.

2. The provided radio messages (WAV files in the ZIP folder) do not match the messages that are in the report.
  - Can you please advise why these recorded messages may differ?

- *Can the text in an incident report be altered or removed?*

There is a difference between what was in the recorded messages and the incident report because the three-way conversation between the Volunteer Support Officer (VSO), Communications Centre, and the Ngāruawāhia appliance related to the replacement of firefighting gear was of a minor nature. It was a short conversation about putting the VSO in touch with the Ngāruawāhia appliance.

Text in the incident report cannot be altered or removed.

3. *A radio message in "Call1150814504.wav" and "Call1150821774.wav" includes the address of the incident, whereas the incident report is blacked out per Section 9(2)(a).*
  - *Is there a reason the address has been included in the audio, or has this been overlooked before being released?*

In our correspondence to you on 5 February 2024, we advised that this was a mistake, and it was our intention to withhold the street address under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA, to protect the privacy of natural persons.

4. *Referring to your reply to point 6, "The total number of communications staff on duty were three shift managers and 11 dispatchers"*
  - *Can you confirm if this was the staffing level in a single Communications Centre or nationally, and if possible, can you provide the staffing level per Communications Centre including if there were any shortages?*

We can advise that this was the total number of Communication Centre staff nationally. However, there was a small error in our previous response. There were three shift managers and twelve dispatchers on duty at the time of this fire.

As to the staffing level per Communication Centre, at the time of this incident, we can advise the following:

- The Northern Communication Centre had one shift manager, and five dispatchers. This is the required shift staffing level at this centre.
- The Central Communication Centre had one shift manager and three dispatchers. This was one dispatcher short of the required shift staffing at this centre.
- The Southern Communication Centre had one shift manager and four dispatchers. This is the required shift staffing level at this centre.

It was the Northern Communication Centre that managed the incident your request relates to.

5. *Referring to Appendix Four, all communications that were identified as relating to the incident, an email on Monday, November 11, 2024 at 3:57pm indicates "When I spoke to them [the Shift Manager] about it, it was a Dispatcher error that was dealt with at the time." This was only three hours after an earlier email saying "The watch is working again on Wednesday, so I will follow up then".*
  - *Has the staff member been included in the email follow up of this incident, or just the Shift Manager?*

In the email provided in our previous response that was sent on 11 November 2024 at 12:44 PM, the Communications Centre Manager indicated they would speak with the Shift Manager on their

return to duty on Wednesday. However, the Shift Manager was in the Communications Centre on other business that day, so the Communications Centre Manager ended up asking the Shift Manager about it then. The email of 11 November 2024, sent at 3:57 PM, was a result of them following up at the time. The dispatcher was not included in this email.

- *Has the staff member, or other such staff been involved in any disciplinary action?*

The staff involved have discussed the incident, and no disciplinary action has been taken.

- *Has the Shift Manager addressed this with the staff, to prevent this occurring in future?*

Yes, please find attached, as **Appendix One** to this response, an email from the Shift Manager to their watch.

- *Has the Shift Manager taken any responsibility for the team/watches actions during this incident, as they overlook the shift, or has that been put solely onto the Dispatcher involved?*

The Shift Manager has taken responsibility as the senior staff member working at the time, and has managed the situation well.

- *Can you provide any documentation relating to any follow up emails to the individual, watch or centre that were sent by the Centre Manager or Shift Manager after this incident occurred?*

Please see **Appendix One** for an email sent by the Shift Manager to their watch in relation to this incident. There have been no further emails sent by the Communications Centre Manager.

- *What support has been provided by the Communications Centre, or the Shift Manager as a result of this?*

The Welfare Officer has been in the Communications Centre since this incident and has spoken with staff. All conversations between the Welfare Officer and staff members are confidential. The Shift Manager and Communications Centre Manager have had regular welfare contact with the Dispatcher involved.

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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

We trust that the information being provided is of assistance. If you require further information, please email [officialinformationrequests@fireandemergency.nz](mailto:officialinformationrequests@fireandemergency.nz).

Nāku noa, nā



Aidan Saunders  
Manager, Information Requests