

Service Request: [REDACTED]

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Dear [REDACTED]

OFFICIAL INFORMATION REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON MEDIA/COMMUNICATIONS

I refer to your information request dated 7 June for a range of information about staff and consultants used for communications over the six years, the amount spent by the organisation on this function, and the number of media queries received and interviews given.

We have treated this request for information as a request under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act.

Before detailing the information we are able to provide and the information that is not held by this organisation, I have provided some context about Nelson City Council and the role fulfilled by communications staff and contractors.

Nelson City Council is a unitary council, this means it fulfils a dual role of district council responsibilities and regional council responsibilities. We manage a range of local infrastructure (such as roads) and community assets and services (such as parks and libraries). We carry out science and environment activities, landuse planning, resource management functions and develop plans to meet the current and future needs of the City. We engage with the community on projects and plans to understand their views and use this information to help shape Nelson.

Nelson City Council, like every local authority in New Zealand must have a Significance and Engagement Policy that guides our engagement approach. Nelson City Council's Significance and Engagement Policy can be found [here](#). Public communication work is a high priority and communications staff are required to assist with this work.

In summary, unitary council communications plays a role in:

- Encouraging people to participate in council consultation/decision making processes on issues that are important to them. It's about democratic decision making, by and for our communities, in line with the requirements of legislation.
- Increasing the number of people who use the services provided, such as public transport.

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- Providing clear, accessible information that helps communities make their own decisions, such as environmental data and bus timetables, as well as providing a good understanding of works that need to be done and the associated costs such as freshwater policy reform and river management and land drainage schemes.
- Encouraging participation in programmes of work being carried out to improve the health of the environment, such as fencing and planting.
- Promoting behaviour change in the areas of conservation, road and maritime safety, and sustainable land practices.
- Ensuring new and existing rules and regulations are clear to those required to apply and comply.

Our work can include but is not limited to:

- Providing web copy
- Copywriting and document production (eg public transport plans)
- Advertising and signage
- Social media content creation (including videography) and monitoring
- Brand management
- Community consultation
- Speech writing
- Media responses and releases

Local government financial years run from 1 July to 30 June of the following year.

Therefore the reporting years we have provided information for are: 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, and a part year of 1 July 2021 to 31 March 2022.

The information you requested (where available) is enclosed.

Number of FTE communications/media staff employed in each year (this includes all internal and external communications staff/content producers and social media staff)

Please note we have interpreted 'internal and external communication staff' to mean the work they cover rather than whether they sit within or externally to the organisation. For the avoidance of doubt, the below FTE reflects staff at Nelson City Council only.

2017-18	5.73
2018-19	5.28
2019-20	6.53
2020-21	6.84
2021-22 (March)	6.14

Over the time period in question (2017-18 to 2022) total headcount at Nelson City Council has increased almost 40% from 260 to 362.

The salary range paid to communications staff in each year.

2017-18	\$59,819 - \$104,240
2018-19	\$61,317 - \$124,450

2019-20	\$62,717 - \$127,412
2020-21	\$46,395 - \$127,412
2021-22 (March)	\$47,322 - \$131,224

Number of communications/media contractors used in each year.

2017-18	0
2018-19	2
2019-20	2
2020-21	3
2021-22 (March)	4

Total sum paid to communications contractors in each year.

2017-18	0
2018-19	\$18,122.10
2019-20	\$56,328.12
2020-21	\$24,133.10
2021-22 (March)	\$81,206.23

A breakdown of positions and numbers employed in each role (ie how many media advisors, senior media advisors, internal communications, managers, social media producers/managers).

Please note these are individual roles and roles are not necessarily full time – please see the FTE breakdown above.

2017-18	Manager Communications, Communications Advisers (5), Digital Content Coordinator
2018-19	Manager Communications, Communications Advisers (4 – 1 FTE is Social Media), Digital Content Co-ordinator
2019-20	Manager Communications, Senior Communications Adviser, Communications Advisers (5 – 1 FTE is Social Media), Digital Content Coordinator
2020-21	Manager Communications, Senior Communications Adviser, Communications Adviser(5 – 1 FTE is Social Media), Communications Assistant
2021-22 (March)	Manager Communications, Senior Communications Advisor, Communications Adviser (5 – 1 FTE is Social Media).

How many media queries received in each year.

Please note we only hold data for one year. We do believe this data is broadly representative and receive around somewhere between 20 and 30 media queries per month.

2017-18	
2018-19	
2019-20	243
2020-21	
2021-22 (March)	

How many interview requests received in each year.

We do not hold this data. All media queries are responded to either by interview, statement or some other means.

How many media interviews given, and to which media organisations and when.
We do not hold this data.

Total salary costs for communications staff each year.

2017/18	\$360,544
2018/2019	\$485,595
2019/2020	\$512,237
2020/21	\$557,033
2021/22 (March)	\$435,484

In each year, how many communications staff paid a salary more than \$100,000 per annum and \$200,000 per annum.

2017-18	1
2018-19	1
2019-20	1
2020-21	2
2021-22 (March)	2

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this response. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or Freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Kim Grade
Manager Communications