

31 March 2025

By email to: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST 2025/13

On the evening of Friday 28 February, you made a request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA) for the following information:

Recent media coverage highlights some work undertaken by the Electoral Commission to restructure staff. I am seeking to understand the financial impacts associated with this mahi. Please provide me with the detailed costs incurred due to the restructures including the cost of the process itself and the outcome. Please list, further, the Savings that will be achieved following the recent restructures.

Please provide detail which should include restructure process costs, any redundancy costs and any costs associated employment dispute settlements in 2024 and 2025 by persons that would have or have been affected by the restructure. Include up to end of Q1 2025, extrapolated if necessary, please.

This should further include any costs incurred engaging external consultants used to temporarily fill vacancies and any costs associated with engaging companies or consultants that provides HR/restructure advice or Legal firms used for any issues associated with the restructures raised by personnel.

It would be appreciated if you could break the costs down by category, grouped by each specific restructure.

LEGAL FEES

EXTERNAL HR ADVICE/CONSULTING

COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH SETTLEMENT OF EMPLOYEE DISPUTES OR PERSONAL GRIEVANCES

TEMPORARY STAFFING/BACKFILL COSTS

Please list the financial savings that will result from the restructures grouped by restructure. Such savings might include saved personnel costs, overheads associated with equipment etc, Savings due to outsourcing etc etc.

Since it has been stated that budget considerations were a driver for the redundancies, can you please advise HOW LONG it will take to break even taking into account the proposed savings (saving in personnel costs - wages, resources etc.) versus the realised costs (including those outlined above) i.e. what is the "payback", when will there be financial savings actually realised. I am interested in the hard facts, quantifiable amounts (good or bad) that can be associated with the restructures... an example might be

*Cost Savings less costs realised associated with restructure x will take N months to break even.
Or*

Cost Savings exceed restructure costs from day 1 for restructure x

Or

There is no tangible financial benefit associated with the restructure x

Finally how did these Financials compare to the Financials defined as part of initial restructure planning/business cases.

The below responses are in regard to the changes we made in our People and Culture team and our IT team during 2024.

The changes to both the IT and People and Culture teams were undertaken to develop an organisational design which established high performing and highly capable teams that can support the Commission to meet its strategic objectives both now and in the future. Both teams are critical to delivering the core function of the Commission, and the existing team structures and position descriptions were no longer fit for purpose.

The following table outlines the incurred costs associated with the changes for the 2024/2025 financial year. We have not split these costs by the two changes, as the changes occurred at the same time, with some costs associated with both changes that are not able to be separated. Further, we have not split the settlement costs under section 149 of the Employment Relations Act. The information is withheld under sections 9(2)(a) and 9(2)(ba) of the OIA on the grounds that the withholding of the information is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons and 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 source, and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied; or would be likely otherwise to damage the public interest. I am satisfied that the reasons for withholding of the information are not outweighed by other considerations which render it desirable, in the public interest, to make that information available.

These changes were not undertaken to achieve any specific financial savings; and therefore, we have not provided any costs or commentary on how savings are being achieved as this was not an outcome we were seeking. The personnel budgets of both teams after the change are expected to stay the same.

The costs incurred for temporary staff backfilling roles have been funded through underspends in the current year personnel budget and relate to the IT team. To provide a fair and equitable change process, existing vacancies within both teams were held and temporary staffing engaged to cover critical functions until recruitment into new roles is completed. The costs relating to employment disputes, personal grievances and redundancies reflect actual costs paid to 31 March 2025.

Specific costs	Total
Legal Advice	\$5,309
Consultancy and external HR Advice	\$43,525
Temporary staff filling vacancies	\$278,413
Settlement of employment disputes, personal grievances and redundancies	\$181,275
Total	\$508,522

In the interests of transparency, we release responses to Official Information Act requests every 3 months. We will publish this response with your personal details redacted.

You have the right under section 28(3) of the Act to make a complaint to the Ombudsman if you are not satisfied with the response to your request. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Lucy Hickman
Deputy Chief Executive, Enterprise Services