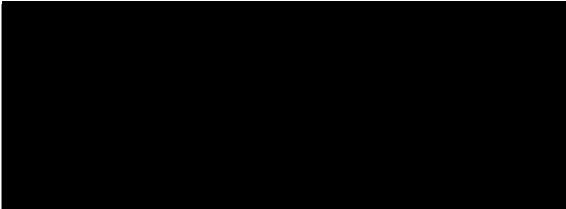




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7 June 2018



Information Request – sexual harassment in the public sector

I refer to your official information request dated 10 May 2018 asking Fire and Emergency New Zealand for information to support your inquiry into sexual harassment in the public sector.

Please note that we intend to publish this letter (with your personal details removed) on Fire and Emergency New Zealand's website.

The safety, health and wellbeing of our people is of paramount importance to us. Discrimination, bullying or harassment of any kind is totally unacceptable.

We are committed to ensuring that all our people are able to participate and have their efforts recognised regardless of their gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, beliefs, opinions or family circumstances. If any of our personnel or volunteers are subject to sexual harassment or see it happening to others, we encourage them to speak up. We take all complaints seriously and act on any complaints that are raised with us.

We have external independent confidential counselling and support services. These are available to all personnel, and their immediate families, at no cost.

You have asked a number of questions. The answers are below:

1. Please tick the box that best describes your organisation

Fire and Emergency is a Crown entity (category: statutory entity, Crown agent).

2. How many people does your organisation employ?

As at 25 May 2018, we employed 2,776 people, including casual staff and 11,195 volunteers.

3. How many complaints or allegations of sexual harassment did your organisation receive in 2015 (Jan-Dec)?

4. How many complaints or allegations of sexual harassment did your organisation receive in 2016 (Jan-Dec)?

5. *How many complaints or allegations of sexual harassment did your organisation receive in 2017 (Jan-Dec)?*
6. *How many complaints or allegations of sexual harassment has your organisation received in 2018 (Jan-April)?*

Between January 2015 and April 2018 nine allegations of sexual harassment were made against 12 Fire and Emergency personnel. Four of the complaints were lodged by female staff; the other five complaints came from people who were not FENZ staff. The years in which the complaints were made are set out in the table below:

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018*
Number	1	2	3	3

*Year to 30 April 2018.

7. *Please tick the forums in which sexual harassment complaints or allegations have been made relating to your organisation (tick as many as applicable)*

Fire and Emergency identifies the following forum from your list in which sexual harassment complaints or allegations have been made:

- Complaint made to your organisation as employer.

8. *If you have to withhold any information requested in this section of the questionnaire, please identify which statutory grounds to decline are relied upon, and why these grounds are applicable.*

N/A

9. *How many people working for your organisation, or in workplaces under your organisation's control, have complained of being subjected to sexual harassment at work, since January 2015?*
10. *How many of those people are still working for you?*
11. *How many people working for your organisation, or in workplaces under your organisation's control, have complained of being subjected to sexual harassment at work since 2015, according to gender?*

Fire and Emergency has received four complaints from staff of being subjected to sexual harassment since January 2015. All four complaints were received from females and all of those staff are still employed.

You will note that in response to questions 3, 4, 5 and 6, we received a total of nine complaints over the requested time period. Five of those complaints were received from people who were not staff.

12. *If you have to withhold any information requested in this section of the questionnaire, please identify which statutory grounds to decline are relied upon, and why these grounds are applicable.*

N/A

13. *How many people working for your organisation, or in workplaces under your organisation's control, have been accused of sexual harassment at work since 2015?*
14. *How many of those people are still working for you?*

15. How many people who are or were working for you or in workplaces under your organisation's control, have been accused of sexual harassment at work since 2015, by gender?

All complaints were made against male staff members. Ten of the accused are still working for Fire and Emergency. Ten of those against whom complaints were made remain still work for Fire and Emergency.

16. Please advise the numbers of people who are or were working for your organisation, or in workplaces under your organisation's control, who have been the subject of two or more complaints of sexual harassment at work.

No staff have been the subject of more than one complaint of sexual harassment at work.

17. If you have to withhold any information requested in this section of the questionnaire, please identify which statutory grounds to decline are relied upon, and why these grounds are applicable.

N/A

18. Please advise the numbers of complaints since 2015 resolved in the following manners (tick as few or as many as necessary):

Of the nine complaints made, four have been upheld, two have been rejected, two are unresolved, and one was resolved informally between the parties at the request of the complainants.

Of the four complaints that were upheld, appropriate disciplinary action was taken.

19. Where applicable, please describe a specific sexual harassment complaint/allegation and how your organisation handled it well. Where applicable, please describe a specific sexual harassment complaint/allegation that your organisation acknowledges it handled less well.

The details of sexual harassment complaints and specific resolutions are highly confidential and sensitive. For this reason, we are refusing your request for information about specific complaints and the way they have been handled section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act 1982.

Fire and Emergency does not consider that, in the circumstances, the withholding of this information is outweighed by other considerations which render it desirable, in the public interest, to make the information available.

20. Does your organisation have a sexual harassment policy?

The standards of behaviour expected of all our personnel, whether permanent, casual or volunteer, are set out in our standards of conduct policy.

The policy requires all personnel to treat everyone fairly and respect the rights of other Fire and Emergency personnel and the public. We expect staff to:

- refrain from discriminating against or harassing other personnel
- respect the cultural background of other personnel and all members of the public
- avoid behaviour that might endanger or cause stress or anxiety to other personnel, or otherwise contribute to any disruption of the workplace, e.g. workplace bullying
- consider the safety of others in the use of Fire and Emergency New Zealand property and resources

- refrain from allowing workplace or personal relationships to be put at risk, or to adversely affect Fire and Emergency New Zealand or its interests, or the performance of official duties.
- respect the privacy of individuals when dealing with personal information, as required by the provisions of the Privacy Act 1993

21. If you have to withhold any information requested in this section of the questionnaire, please identify which statutory grounds to decline are relied upon, and why these grounds are applicable.

See our response to Question 19.

22. Is there any other comment your organisation wishes to add?

See our opening statement.

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 or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Leigh Deuchars
Director, Office of the Chief Executive