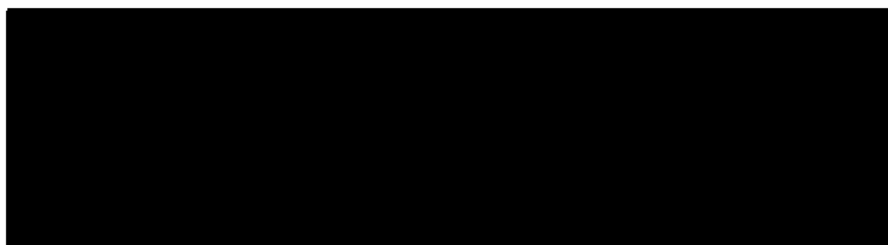




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30 July 2018



Information Request – Workplace Sexual Harassment

I refer to your official information request dated 11 June 2018 asking for the following information:

- *Any and all advice, reports, memos, and communication provided to the Department of Internal Affairs or the relevant minister regarding workplace sexual harassment.*
- *Any and all advice, reports, memos, and communication provided to the Chief Executive and/or the Board of Fire and Emergency NZ regarding workplace sexual harassment.*
- *The number of workplace sexual harassment complaints Fire and Emergency NZ (or its predecessor) has received in the past five years*
 - *Please include if the complaint was investigated, the outcome of the investigation, and if any, the disciplinary action.*
 - *Please specify if the complaints were received by firefighters, volunteer firefighters or other Fire and Emergency NZ employees.*
- *Any and all advice, reports, memos, and communication on policy, procedures and/or initiatives regarding sexual harassment.*

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.

You will also have seen that retired judge Coral Shaw has been appointed to lead a review of policy, procedures and practices within Fire and Emergency New Zealand.

As a new organisation which has brought together 40 different organisations with 40 different cultures, identities and ways of doing things, we want to make sure our culture encompasses diversity in gender, ethnicity and thinking.

You have asked a number of questions. The answers follow:

- Any and all advice, reports, memos, and communication provided to the Department of Internal Affairs or the relevant minister regarding workplace sexual harassment.
- Any and all advice, reports, memos, and communication provided to the Chief Executive and/or the Board of Fire and Emergency NZ regarding workplace sexual harassment.

You have not provided a timeframe for the information requested. For our purposes, we have considered information during the tenure of the current Board, which commenced on 1 July 2016.

We have been able to locate only one document in scope during this period. This document was a briefing provided to the Chief Executive of Fire and Emergency New Zealand in June 2018, ahead of the release of an earlier request for information on sexual harassment in the public service. A copy of our response to that request is now held on our website. The briefing is withheld under section 9(2)(g)(i) of the OIA.

We have also located an internal Audit Report entitled *Bullying and Harassment Review May 2016*. While the document was finalised just outside the timeframe we assigned to this request and is not specifically focussed on sexual harassment, we consider it reasonable to provide you with a copy. A small amount of information has been withheld under section 9(2)(ba)(i) of the OIA. We consider making that information available would be likely to prejudice the supply of similar information in the future.

We consider that, in the circumstances of this particular case, the withholding of this information is not outweighed by other considerations which render it desirable, in the public interest, to make the information available.

- The number of workplace sexual harassment complaints Fire and Emergency NZ (or its predecessor) has received in the past five years
 - Please include if the complaint was investigated, the outcome of the investigation, and if any, the disciplinary action.
 - Please specify if the complaints were received by firefighters, volunteer firefighters or other Fire and Emergency NZ employees.

Between January 2014 and June 2018, ten allegations of sexual harassment were made against Fire and Emergency personnel. You have clarified that you want to know information about who made the complaints not who received them. The following table provides details of those allegations.

Year	Number of complaints	Substantiated	Unsubstantiated	On going	actions	Who complaint made by
2014	0					
2015	1	1		0	• resignation	Volunteer
2016	2		2 (but one warning issued for inappropriate behaviour)	0	• warning issued	2 public
2017	3	1	2 (but one warning issued for inappropriate behaviour)	0	• 2 warnings	3 public
2018*	4	2	2 (one complaint resolved before investigation)	0	• one resignation • one verbal warning & apology issued	3 Volunteers 1 Other Paid
Total	10	4	6	0		

* to 11 June 2018

Any and all advice, reports, memos, and communication on policy, procedures and/or initiatives regarding sexual harassment.

The standards of behaviour expected of all our personnel, whether permanent, casual or volunteer, are set out in our standards of conduct policy. A copy of that policy is attached. Also attached is a copy of the internal staff communications that are available on our intranet to help staff respond to bullying and harassment.

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. Note also that this response (with your personal details removed) may be published on the Fire and Emergency website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Leigh Deuchars', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Leigh Deuchars
Director, Office of the Chief Executive

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