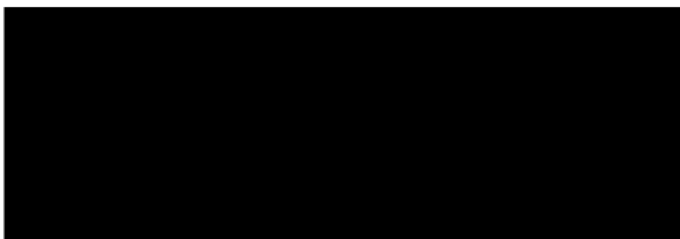




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20 September 2018



Information Request – The cost of false call outs for Fire and Emergency

I refer to your official information request dated 10 August 2018 asking for the following information:

- 1. How many false call out calls has the FENZ received and acted on, broken down into the last three financial years?*
- 2. How many actual calls outs, that have resulted in a fire, has FENZ received, broken down into the last three financial years?*
- 3. What is the total cost of these call outs, broken down into the last three financial years?*
- 4. What measures, if any, have you taken as Minister for Internal Affairs, to reduce the number of false call outs which would reduce the cost to the fire levy payer?*
- 5. What was the FY2015/16 cost for funding the NZ Fire Service Fire Brigades in each of the following communities; (a) Blenheim (b) Timaru (c) Ashburton (d) Kawerau (e) Te Awamutu (f) Masterton (g) Oamaru (h) Gisborne*
- 6. What was the FY2016/17 cost for funding the NZ Fire Service Fire Brigades in each of the following communities; (a) Blenheim (b) Timaru (c) Ashburton (d) Kawerau (e) Te Awamutu (f) Masterton (g) Oamaru (h) Gisborne*
- 7. What was the FY2017/18 cost for funding the NZ Fire Service Fire Brigades in each of the following communities; (a) Blenheim (b) Timaru (c) Ashburton (d) Kawerau (e) Te Awamutu (f) Masterton (g) Oamaru (h) Gisborne.*

In accordance with the Official Information Act 1982, I set out Fire and Emergency's response to your questions below.

Questions 1 & 2

The attached report details the number of false alarm incidents and fires attended by Fire and Emergency broken down into the past three financial years.

Where the report indicates (NEW), these incidents are recent and Fire and Emergency has not yet generated a full incident report for them, including the identification of subcategories.

Question 3

Fire and Emergency is currently funded to be ready and able to respond as and when its services are required by the public. On that basis, Fire and Emergency's financial systems are configured to record costs from the perspective of having the infrastructure and resources in place to respond to

incidents as they occur, regardless of their nature. Fire and Emergency New Zealand's financial systems do not record costs at the incident level, therefore we are unable to provide this information.

Question 4

Operational matters, such as initiatives to reduce false call outs, are the responsibility of the Chief Executive of Fire and Emergency not the Minister for Internal Affairs. Fire and Emergency is focused on reducing unwanted callouts. We are currently undertaking research to help us establish the true cost of false alarm call outs. We are looking at fire alarm standards, which are due for a rewrite, and educating businesses about other costs of false alarms such as evacuating paying customers. We are also working closely with the Fire Protection Association to strengthen the messages customers receive when they have smoke alarms installed.

Question 5, 6 & 7

The table below details the total operational expenditure for the urban stations you identified. Note that where a station is paid or composite, the operational expenditure includes funding for career staff.

Station	Type	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Te Awamutu	Volunteer	\$127,000	\$153,000	\$161,000
Kawerau	Composite	\$1,786,000	\$1,721,000	\$1,852,000
Gisborne	Composite	\$3,128,000	\$3,261,000	\$3,285,000
Masterton	Composite	\$2,181,000	\$2,263,000	\$2,340,000
Blenheim	Volunteer	\$300,000	\$277,000	\$292,000
Ashburton	Volunteer	\$199,000	\$199,000	\$409,000
Timaru	Paid	\$3,671,000	\$3,630,000	\$3,904,000
Oamaru	Volunteer	\$194,000	\$224,000	\$245,000

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



Bella Sutherland
Director, Office of the Chief Executive

end

False Alarms	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Total
False Alarm (NEW)	20	14	18	52
Malicious	1,013	1,009	1,011	3,033
Defective Apparatus	5,669	6,190	7,349	19,208
Accidental Operation	8,124	8,235	7,714	24,073
Nothing on Indicator Panel	4,439	4,747	1,610	10,796
Alarm Agent in Attendance			636	636
Good Intent	5,856	5,542	5,914	17,312
Undetermined	575	598	3,307	4,480
Total	25,696	26,335	27,559	79,590

Fires	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Total
Structure Fire				
Structure Fire (NEW)	8	11	6	25
Structure fire with damage	2,739	2,588	2,791	8,118
Structure fire with no damage	2,634	2,638	2,451	7,723
Subtotal	5,381	5,237	5,248	15,866
Vegetation Fire				
Vegetation Fire (NEW)	51	79	1	131
Vegetation Fire	4,952	3,846	4,972	12,870
Subtotal	5,003	3,925	5,973	13,001
Other Fire				
Mobile Property Fire	2,095	2,232	2,386	6,713
Hazardous Substance Fire	91	87	57	235
Other Fire (NEW)	36	43	5	84
Outside Rubbish bin, Skip fire	1,155	1,057	3,341	5,553
Other Fire - not classified above	6,552	5,859	3,891	16,302
Subtotal	9,929	9,278	9,680	28,887
Total	20,313	18,440	19,001	57,754