

17 May 2023

David Haynes
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Tēnā koe David

Thank you for your email of 31 March 2023, in which you requested information relating to the *Review of the Governance of Fish and Game New Zealand and the Regional Fish and Game Councils, February 2021*. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 ('OIA').

You requested the following information relating to the costs and outcomes of the Implementation Steering Group ('ISG') established to implement recommendations as set out in the 'Review of the Governance of Fish and Game New Zealand and the Regional Fish and Game Councils, February 2021':

- 1. Copies of the itemised invoices that collectively match the total fees and expenses submitted by the chairperson of the ISG (Mr Ray Grubb).*
- 2. A copy of the final report (intended for further consultation) prepared by the ISG and submitted to the Department of Conservation prior to the ISG's disestablishment.*
- 3. The total costs incurred by the Department thus far in relation to the 'Review of the Governance of Fish and Game New Zealand and the Regional Fish and Game Councils'.*
- 4. Copies of any annual budgets submitted by the ISG to the Department of Conservation.*

On 2 May 2023, we extended the timeframe to respond to your request to 17 May 2023, as your request necessitates a search through a large quantity of information, and meeting the original time limit would unreasonably interfere with the operations of the Department of Conservation ('the Department').

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

- 1. Copies of the itemised invoices that collectively match the total fees and expenses submitted by the chairperson of the ISG (Mr Ray Grubb).*

We extended the timeframe to respond to your request to search our databases for itemised invoices, submitted by the Implementation Steering Group's Chairperson, between April 2021 and October 2022, and thoroughly assess whether this information should be released under the OIA.

Upon careful consideration, we are unable to provide you with the itemised invoices, collectively matching the total fees and expenses, submitted by Ray Grubb, Chairperson of the Implementation Steering Group, pursuant to the following sections of the OIA:



- Section 9(2)(a) - *to protect the privacy of natural persons, including deceased people*
- Section 9(2)(ba)(ii) - *to protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence or which any person has been or could be compelled to provide under the authority of any enactment, where the making available of the information would be likely otherwise to damage the public interest.*

Although, in accordance with section 16(1)(e) of the OIA, we can disclose that Mr Grubb invoiced the Department a total of \$41,489.16 for his work as Chairperson of the ISG, between April 2021 and October 2022. Specifically, this included \$1,589.16 for mileage and \$39,900 for time worked.

The review has been useful for Fish and Game in guiding the improvement of its governance tools and processes. Many of the review's recommendations would not require legislation change and senior Departmental officials have encouraged Fish and Game to proceed with addressing the non-legislative recommendations in the review. We understand that the recently appointed Chief Executive of Fish and Game New Zealand has been considering how best to move on those recommendations.

2. *A copy of the final report (intended for further consultation) prepared by the ISG and submitted to the Department of Conservation prior to the ISG's disestablishment.*

With reference to section 18(e) of the OIA, there is no final report, intended for further consultation, prepared by the ISG and submitted to the Department prior to the group's disestablishment.

3. *The total costs incurred by the Department thus far in relation to the 'Review of the Governance of Fish and Game New Zealand and the Regional Fish and Game Councils'.*

The Department has incurred a total cost of \$423,345, in relation to the 'Review of the Governance of Fish and Game New Zealand and the Regional Fish and Game Councils'.

This figure includes the cost of the governance review and the cost of the ISG. The cost of the review includes the fees and disbursements charged by the reviewers, the fee charged by the writer, and the travel costs and expenses of the reviewers not charged as disbursements. The cost of the ISG includes the cost of Mr Grubb, and a Fish and Game employee working on the ISG; the cost of Ray Grubb's and the employee's expenses; the cost of the Department's contribution to regional structure review report commissioned by Fish and Game; and the cost of a legal review. The cost does not include the time or expenses of Departmental officials.

4. *Copies of any annual budgets submitted by the ISG to the Department of Conservation.*



With reference to section 18(e) of the OIA, no annual budgets were submitted by the ISG to the Department.

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the OIA and determined there are no public interests that outweigh the grounds for withholding.

You are entitled to seek an investigation and review of my decision by writing to an Ombudsman as provided by section 28(3) of the OIA.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) and enclosed documents may be published on the Department's website.

Nāku noa, nā

Lucy Alcock
Director Governance and Government Services
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai