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Rex Tillington

By email: fyi-request-16846-25e15cbb@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Rex

Information Request – bullying and harassment data

I refer to your official information request received on 22 September 2021 asking for the following information:

- *Would you please provide the number of official complaints made by staff or volunteers pertaining to bullying and harassment allegedly undertaken by managers at FENZ, specifically by manager tier (tiers 1 through 4) and year for each FY from 2017/18 to present (including 2021/22 ytd).*
- *Could you also please provide the number of staff (not volunteers) who have resigned from FENZ citing bullying and or harassment by managers (also tiers 1 through 4 only) by year (as above).*

On 20 October 2021, we wrote to you to extend the time limit for deciding on your request.

Misconduct of any type, including bullying and harassment, has no place in our organisation. We expect every complaint of such behaviour to be taken seriously and addressed in a fair and timely way. Everyone at Fire and Emergency New Zealand should feel safe, welcome and included. The recent establishment of the permanent Behaviour and Conduct Office (BCO) is a key step in addressing bullying and harassment and building a respectful and positive workplace culture at Fire and Emergency. Anyone wanting to come forward and raise issues about people's behaviour in Fire and Emergency can raise them directly with the BCO. The BCO is a self-contained team, with a wide range of experience and skills in the complaints, investigation and resolution space. They are charged with ensuring all issues are dealt with in a fair, timely and transparent way. The BCO also coordinates external investigations into unwanted interpersonal behaviour using suitably qualified external investigators based on agreed and consistent criteria. Our people are also able to complain to independent bodies; these are detailed in our policies.

In addition, our Positive Workplace Culture programme is implementing a range of initiatives to continue addressing the 33 review recommendations from retired Judge Coral Shaw's 2019 report *Independent Review of Fire & Emergency New Zealand's workplace policies, procedures and practices to address bullying and harassment*. Our six-month Progress Report on our Positive Workplace Culture Plan outlines the progress we have made, and continue to make, towards this. You can read more on this website:

<https://positiveworkplace.fireandemergency.nz/>

Your request has been assessed in accordance with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982 ("OIA"). The number of bullying or harassment complaints made against tier 1-4 managers between 1 July 2017 and 30 September 2021 is 28. We consider it is necessary to aggregate the data in order to protect the privacy of individuals who might otherwise be able to be identified if we displayed the data by manager tier and year. Fire and Emergency does not consider that, in the circumstances of this particular case, the privacy interest is outweighed by other considerations that make it desirable, in the public interest, to provide the information in non-aggregated form.

You have also asked for the number of staff who have resigned citing bullying or harassment by tier 1-4 managers. People may resign from employment for a number of personal reasons, and we do not know or record those reasons. Consequently, it is necessary to decline this part of your request under section 18(g) of the OIA as the information is not held by Fire and Emergency.

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



Raewyn Bleakley
Deputy Chief Executive, Office of the Chief Executive

