



25 November 2022

John Luke

fyi-request-20748-d99f4394@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe John Luke

On 4 October 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

On behalf of the Minister for Social Development and Employment, the Ministry of Social Development is seeking community focused people for the role of Community Representative on the local Benefits Review Committee. These positions cover throughout the Auckland Region.

The Benefits Review Committee provides an informal setting for clients to review decisions made by the Ministry of Social Development about their benefit entitlement.

As a Community Representative, you will provide a community perspective to the Benefits Review Committee's decision-making process. You will be required to read benefit review reports, attend hearings arranged for the client and the Ministry, and consider decisions on a case by case basis. Hearings are scheduled to be held 4 to 6 weekly, however as there is a pool of Community Representatives in each region, individual Community Representatives may not be required to sit on every hearing. In this role, you will need to be able to relate to a range of people within the wider community, have good community experience and knowledge, and respect the views, beliefs and cultural perspectives of others.

This is a Ministerial appointment. Names of successful candidates will be forwarded for consideration by the Minister for Social Development and Employment.

- 1. May I ask how did you call for public nomination and on what platform you have call for public nominations, e.g. govt.jobs website.*
- 2. Also, how many applications you have received from the public*
- 3. How many you have received from other nominating agencies such as TPK.*
- 4. Further, how many position available that you intend to appoint.*

- 5. Can I further request the from 1st Jan 2020 to now- pay out amount (service fees and reimbursement amount) per each Community Representative members in Auckland.*

On 4 November 2022, the Ministry emailed you to apologise for the late response to your Official Information Act request and advised that we required more time to respond to your request.

The Ministry will now respond to your request in turn for the sake of clarity.

- 1. May I ask how did you call for public nomination and on what platform you have call for public nominations, e.g. govt.jobs website.*
- 2. Also, how many applications you have received from the public*
- 3. How many you have received from other nominating agencies such as TPK.*

The Ministry reached out to our Employee-Led Networks within the Auckland region to promote the role, the Ministry also informed our local offices so the role could be promoted to the communities that our people serve and live in. The Ministry also advertised the roles on the government job website jobs.govt.nz and Seek www.seek.co.nz.

During the recruitment process, the Ministry received 15 applications and the vacancy closed 9 October 2022. Applicants were asked to apply online and some applicants have been endorsed by community groups as part of their application.

- 4. Further, how many position available that you intend to appoint.*

The Ministry confirms that the advertisement for the recruitment of new Benefits Review Committee (BRC) Community Representatives in the Auckland region has been completed. However, the Ministry has not been able to find a member of the community that can sit on the selection and interviewing panel as part of the process. The selection and interviewing will now, not likely to be completed until early 2023. We are therefore unable to confirm the number of new nominees for the BRC Community Representative position in the Auckland region. As such, your request for this information is refused in full under section 18(g) of the Act as the information you had requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is either held by or closely connected to the functions of another department, Minister of the Crown or organisation.

- 5. Can I further request the from 1st Jan 2020 to now- pay out amount (service fees and reimbursement amount) per each Community Representative members in Auckland.*

Community Representatives are paid for work actually done. The Ministry is responsible for making these payments.

Payment rate (gross):

- \$131.26 for 0 to 3 hours (including 3 hours)
- \$262.52 for more than 3 hours (time spent in preparation for hearings is included in the hours calculated for payment).

For example, if three hearings are heard in a day and they take a total of three hours to complete and you spent 1 hour in preparation time, payment would be made at the rate of \$262.52.

Allowances paid for expenses incurred in your course of duty are subject to withholding tax at the rate of 33%. However, certain reimbursements are exempt from withholding tax, provided the following conditions are met:

- The expenditure must have been incurred by the committee member in the course of duties performed on behalf of the Ministry; and
- The expenditure must be reimbursed based on receipts or invoices retained by the Ministry.

More information regarding the guidelines of the Fees Framework, can be found at the link below:

www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/contact-us/complaints/community-representative-information-pack.pdf

Please see the **Appendix** below showing **Table One** which outlines the pay-out amount for each Community Representative for period 26 December 2020 to 12 October 2022.

The names of the Community Representatives are withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act to protect the privacy of a natural persons. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any

attached documents available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry's website. Your personal details will be deleted, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane Anderson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Diane Anderson
Manager
Client Advocacy and Review Team

Appendix.

Table One: Pay out amount per Community Representative for period 26 December 2019 to 12 October 2022.

DET NUMBER	Preferred Name	Surname	Sum of Gross
9(2)(a)	9(2)(a)	9(2)(a)	612.55
9(2)(a)	9(2)(a)	9(2)(a)	3223.19
9(2)(a)	9(2)(a)	9(2)(a)	17173.97
9(2)(a)	9(2)(a)	9(2)(a)	12619.06
9(2)(a)	9(2)(a)	9(2)(a)	34563.37
9(2)(a)	9(2)(a)	9(2)(a)	16427.33
9(2)(a)	9(2)(a)	9(2)(a)	24716.81
9(2)(a)	9(2)(a)	9(2)(a)	1462.32

Note:

- The amounts given are from the Ministry's payroll team. The Ministry's payroll only pays those who are GST registered. If they are not GST registered, then they are paid through National Accounting Centre.
- The amounts given are only for those who have submitted claim forms and they have been sent to payroll by the budget manager. If a member has not claimed, then it won't appear in payroll.