

17/12/2024

Alan Thompson
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Tēnā koe Alan

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation, received on 20 November 2024, in which you asked for:

“Under the provisions of the Official Information Act can you please supply me with the following information:

- 1. The Dept of Conservation expenditure on Fire Control for the FY2023/24.*
- 2. The Dept of Conservation's fire suppression costs for attendance at fires which originated on DOC land for the period FY2023/24.*
- 3. The Dept of Conservation's fire suppression costs for attendance at fires that did not originate on DOC land for the period FY2023/24.*
- 4. A breakdown of the fire suppression costs that DOC recovered or intend to recover from FENZ for the period FY2023/24.*
- 5. The payment made to FENZ for the period 2023/24 as an annual contribution to fire control costs on DOC lands.*
- 6. The estimated Carbon loss from wildfires on Public Crown Land for 2023/24.”*

We have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982.

The nature of this request is noted as being consistent with previous requests you have made annually for the last few years.

In providing our responses below, please note:

- We provide fire control services to Fire and Emergency NZ (FENZ), as agreed in the 2021 Operational Services Agreement between the organisations.
- Your request refers to both “*DOC land*” and “*Public Crown Land*”. The Department manages public conservation land and national parks. The information supplied relates to this land, referred together as Public Conservation Land (PCL).
- The figures have been calculated in the same manner as those provided for the 2022/23 financial year.
- The Department’s financial year runs from 1 July to 30 June, and we have rounded our costs to the \$1,000. Some figures will not capture all costs for fires attended during the 2023/2024 financial year, as some of the costs are still being processed.

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

1. *The Department of Conservation's expenditure on Fire Control for the 2023/2024 FY.*

Our total expenditure for fire control during the 2023/24 financial year (FY) was \$2,430,000. Please note that, in this response, expenditure for fire control has been limited to fire suppression (that is, detecting, controlling, and putting out fire), as fire prevention could be considered to include a variety of our business-as-usual tasks.

2. *The Department of Conservation's fire suppression costs for attendance at fires which originated on DOC land for the period FY2023/2024.*

Our total fire suppression costs for attendance at fires that originated on PCL during the 2023/2024 FY was \$261,000. This includes FENZ attendance costs charged to the Department.

3. *The Department of Conservation's fire suppression costs for attendance at fires that did not originate on DOC land for the period FY2023/2024.*

Our total fire suppression costs for attendance at fires that did not originate on PCL during the 2023/2024 FY was \$4,500. This total excludes Departmental costs recovered or intended to be recovered from FENZ.

4. *A breakdown of the fire suppression costs that DOC recovered or intend to recover from FENZ for the period 2023/2024 FY.*

A breakdown of the fire suppression costs that the Department recovered or intends to recover from FENZ for the 2023/2024 FY is outlined below:

• Personnel	\$ 59,000
• Equipment and vehicles	\$ 8,000
• Third party costs (consumables)	<u>\$ 0</u>
	Total = \$ 67,000

5. *The payment made to FENZ for the period 2023/2024 as an annual contribution to fire control costs on DOC lands.*

We made a payment of \$1,000,000 (excluding GST) to FENZ for the 2023/2024 FY as a contribution for the non-fire suppression services they provide.

6. *The estimated Carbon loss from wildfires on Public Crown Land for 2023/24*

The Department estimates (above ground, such as vegetation) carbon loss from the Te Pahi, Cape Reinga Fire on PCL during the 2023/2024 FY to be between 8,850-9,150 t CO₂. This is based on the balanced burning wood equation (C₆H₁₀O₅ (cellulose) + 6O₂ → 6CO₂ + 5H₂O + heat.), the Total Fuel Consumption (TFC) kg/m⁻¹ from Prometheus Fire modelling, Scion Available Fuel Load (AFL) estimation, the Landcover database (for fuel-types), and estimated fire-extent.



We note only one (Te Paki, Cape Reinga Fire) of thirteen fires recorded on PCL for the 2023/2024 FY has available data for carbon loss estimation.

Further, these figures do not include the costs of a fire in Otago during the 2023/2024 FY, for which the Point of Origin is yet to be determined; therefore, we are not currently able to define whether the costs lie with FENZ or the Department (\$93,000).

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

If you wish to discuss this with the Department, please contact Brent Swanson, National Wildfire Manager, on 027 544 0175 or by email bswanson@doc.govt.nz.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "ajohnstone".

Alastair Johnstone
Director National Operations
Department of Conservation *Te Papa Atawhai*