

12 April 2016

David Lawson  
[fyi-request-3731-33014c06@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-3731-33014c06@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Mr Lawson

### Official Information Act Request

Thank you for your email dated 9 March 2016 containing a number of requests for information under the Official Information Act 1982 (Act).

Your requests and our corresponding responses are set out below. We have grouped your requests according to subject matter. The wording of your specific requests is set out in ACC's response, written in *italics*.

#### **Request One**

*"I am requesting under the OIA all official information in relation to the Intricate Claims Unit that is operating at the Wellington Branch.*

*Please provide the full business plan, structure and objectives of this unit, together with all information that details the selection criteria for ACC claimants to be removed from their local area branch to this nationally based Intricate Claims Unit.*

...

*Please also provide full details of the level of staffing and whether this is a single national branch unit or whether there are other similar units nationally and if so where they are based.*

...

*Please supply to me the full official information surrounding the reasons for the development and implementation of such a unit and how long that this unit has been operational.*

...

*Please also provide all information that is associated with the claims management streaming that the ACC clients who are relocated to this unit are managed."*

#### **Response to Request One**

The Wellington Central Branch (WCB) (initially referred to as the Intricate Claims Unit) commenced operating in April 2015. This Specialist Service Unit provides a nationwide service and is located in Wellington (but not with any Central area branch).

The WCB does not have its own business plan. It falls under the general business plan and strategy for ACC's Client Service Delivery.

The current staffing of the WCB is made up of one branch manager, one technical claims manager and three case managers.

WCB was established to support clients who have had difficult journeys with ACC. This reason provides a basis for the selection criteria for transfer to WCB. The transfer process

entails a client meeting a mixture of criteria that includes (but is not limited to) the fact of a client's claim taking up a disproportionate amount of a case manager's time compared to others of a like nature; concerns and issues being continually raised despite being addressed and resolved in a manner agreed to by both the client and ACC; and repeated frivolous requests of an administratively burdensome nature. The final decision to transfer to the WCB involves input from the (local area) Branch Manager and the WCB Manager.

Case/claim management streaming is no different from that undertaken at local area branches.

### **Request Two**

*Can you please confirm whether the Intricate Claims Unit is in fact the Remote Claims Unit rebranded.*

### **Response to Request Two**

The WCB is a Specialist Service Unit that is separate and different from the Remote Claims Unit.

The Remote Claims Unit (RCU) is responsible for managing all aspects of claims and entitlements relating to clients who have been identified as a high safety risk to ACC staff. There is no branch office. There are specific protocols in place and clients being managed by the RCU can only deal with RCU case managers.

### **Request Three**

*Please also provide all flow charts that provide full information as to how this unit, fits in with the balance of all other ACC Claims Management Units.*

### **Response to Request Three**

There are no flow charts "that provide full information as to how this unit, fits in with the balance of all other ACC Claims Management Units". Consequently, we decline to provide a copy as we do not have a document that contains flow charts of this information. This decision is made in accordance with section 18(e) of the Act.

Although ACC is not in a position to provide a flow chart, we can provide an outline of the key components of ACC's Client Service Delivery Group and how WCB sits within it.

There are four local branch areas – Northern, Auckland, Southern and Central – that make up the Claims Management Network.

Specialist Services manage claims and entitlements that require specialist processes and knowledge – including claims for clients with complex needs. All units within Specialist Services provide nationwide service and are located at various areas around New Zealand. As noted above, the WCB falls within Specialist Services and is located in Wellington.

The RCU is separate to the above local area branches and specialist service units.

There are also six Service Centres responsible for specialist claims processing and assessment functions. Amongst these, the Treatment Injury Centre assesses cover for treatment injury claims and produce 'risk of harm' reporting; and the Elective Services Centre assesses elective surgery, pharmaceuticals and extended treatment requests.

### **Request Four**

*"Please also include all official information in respect of the communication plans that the ACC claimants are subjected to."*

**Response to Request Four**

There is no formal process or policy for 'communication plans'. Also, there are no standard letters or templates connected to these plans.

It is usual practice for the branch or business group manager to take responsibility for any communication plans. The general idea of a communication plan is to allow ACC to have more control over how and what it wants to communicate with/to a client – particularly in circumstances where a client is making the same or similar requests to multiple parties within ACC.

A plan should not restrict a client's access to ACC or impose communication restrictions which may be contradictory to ACC's obligations under the Code of ACC Claimants' Rights. It should state how ACC are going to manage and respond to incoming correspondence from, and outgoing communication to, a specific client. The plan and the basis for it must be revisited on a regular basis.

**Request Five**

*Please confirm to me as to whether claimants at the Intricate Claims Unit have their communications vetted by the ACC Legal services team before any responses to an ACC claimants request for information or answers to questions are provided to the ACC claimant.*

**Response to Request Five**

Communication with clients is not usually vetted by ACC's Legal Services.

Input is typically only sought from Legal Services when legal professional privilege may be at issue, or a request is about Legal Services or touches on a matter being dealt with by Legal Services at that time.

**Queries or concerns about ACC's response**

If you have further questions, contact us by email at [GovernmentServices@acc.co.nz](mailto:GovernmentServices@acc.co.nz).

You have the right to make a complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman regarding our response. You can call them on 0800 802 602, 9am to 5pm weekdays, or write to: The Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10 152, Wellington 6143.

Yours sincerely

**Government Services**