




4 July 2023



Tēnā koe 

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation, received on 08 June 2023, in which you asked for:

“can you please provide me with:

- 1. the details of any policy the department has of paying bonuses or similar for staff proficiency in te reo Māori.*
- 2. the department’s policy document(s) that relate to remuneration for competency in te reo Māori. And include a complete breakdown of the level of remuneration/bonus or similar offered for different levels of competence.*
- 3. the department’s test/measure of te reo Māori competence for the purposes of this policy.*
- 4. the reason(s) for compensating te reo competence?*
- 5. which groups of DOC staff are eligible to participate (and how many staff members this adds up to). And tell me when the policy began.*
- 6. how many DOC staff require te reo Māori fluency for the practical purpose of communicating in the course of their work?*
- 7. how many staff received remuneration/bonus or similar for te reo competence in each of the fiscal years in which the policy has been running, including the current one (broken down by the competency categories DOC uses, for example basic, intermediate and advanced).*
- 8. provide the cost, broken down by competency category, and also by fiscal year.”*

Context

The Department has a Te Reo Māori ō Te Papa Atawhai Māori Language Policy (“Māori Language Policy”) which has been in place since 2017 but this policy does not provide any bonus or compensating for attaining a level of competency.

The Department introduced a Te Reo Capability Building Allowance into the new Collective Agreements that were ratified on 25 May 2023. This allowance comes into effect next year, on 1 July 2024.

Response

We have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 and your questions and our responses are listed below:

- [please provide] the details of any policy the department has of paying bonuses or similar for staff proficiency in te reo Māori.**

At this stage, there is no specific policy regarding recognition for staff proficiency in te reo Māori, so this part of your request is refused under section 18(g) of the OIA because the information does not exist. However, the clause in the newly ratified collective agreements that relates to a Te Reo Capability Building Allowance states:

8.20 Te Reo Māori

- Te Papa Atawhai is working toward meeting its obligations to Whāinga Amorangi and is committed to promoting learning and use of te reo Māori and contributing to the success of the Maihi Karauna Māori Language Strategy.*
- From 1 July 2024 Te Papa Atawhai will recognise an employee's competence in Te Reo Māori by payment of a Te Reo Māori allowance. The rate of the allowance paid is based on the level of certification given by Te Taura Whiri I Te Reo Māori (The Māori Language Commission). On achievement of appropriate certification by Te Taura Whiri I Te Reo Māori an employee is to be paid an allowance in accordance with the following schedule:*
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<i>Te Taura Whiri Assessment Level</i>	<i>Allowance Per Annum</i>
<i>Level 5</i>	<i>\$3,500</i>
<i>Level 4</i>	<i>\$2,500</i>
<i>Level 3</i>	<i>\$1,800</i>

NOTE: The allowance is not cumulative.

- [please provide] the department's policy document(s) that relate to remuneration for competency in te reo Māori. And include a complete breakdown of the level of remuneration/bonus or similar offered for different levels of competence.**

As in our response to question 1, the Department has no specific policy that relates to recognition for competency in te reo Māori so this part of your request is refused under section 18(g) of the OIA because the information does not exist. Information about the breakdown of the level of remuneration, bonus or similar offered for different levels of competence that is set out in the Department's collective agreements is included in our answer to question 1 above, but please note that this is not effective until 1 July 2024.

- [please provide] the department's test/measure of te reo Māori competence for the purposes of this policy**

Please refer to our response to Question 1.

4. [please provide] the reason(s) for compensating te reo competence

The reason(s) for recognising te reo competence is to meet the Department's obligations to Whāinga Amorangi and it is committed to promoting learning and use of te reo Māori and contributing to the success of the Maihi Karauna Māori Language Strategy.

5. [please provide] which groups of DOC staff are eligible to participate (and how many staff members this adds up to). And tell me when the policy began.

When the terms in the Collective Agreement around recognising staff for their te reo competency come into effect on 1 July 2024, only those staff covered by the two Collective Agreement terms and conditions are eligible to claim the allowance. This will be approximately 2,000 staff.

6. [please provide] how many DOC staff require te reo Māori fluency for the practical purpose of communicating in the course of their work?

There are no positions that require te reo Māori fluency for the practical purpose of communicating in the course of their work. There is an expectation that staff will have or will build their capability over time in te ao Māori me ōna tikanga in line with the expectations from the Public Service Commission (Te Kawa Mataaho).

7. [please provide] how many staff received remuneration/bonus or similar for te reo competence in each of the fiscal years in which the policy has been running, including the current one (broken down by the competency categories DOC uses, for example basic, intermediate and advanced).

The implementation of the new allowance comes into effect on 1 July 2024 and therefore no staff have yet received a remuneration/bonus or similar for te reo competence, so this part of your request is refused under section 18(g) of the OIA because the information does not exist.

8. [please provide] provide the cost, broken down by competency category, and also by fiscal year."

To date there has been no cost in relation to this allowance so this part of your request is refused under section 18(g) of the OIA because the information does not exist.

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

Nāku noa, nā



Tracy Calder
Chief People Officer
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai