

ENQ-39148-T1X7M8

29 July 2020

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Via: requests@taxpayers.org.nz

CC: ██████████

Lockdown Expenditure Official Information Act Request

Dear ██████████

I refer to your request received on 3 July 2020, for the following information:

1. *"All staff credit and purchase card statements for your agency from the 1st of March 2020 until the 30th of May 2020.*
2. *A list of items of expenditure pertaining to entertainment, staff expenses, travel, furniture, telecommunications and computer peripherals purchased or paid for between the 1st of March 2020 and 30th of May 2020.*
3. *A list of all staff reimbursements made within the same period."*

Your request has been treated as a request for information under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). The information you requested can be found in the following documents attached to this letter:

1. April Credit Card Statements.pdf
2. March Credit Card Statements.pdf
3. May Credit Card Statements.pdf
4. Prepaid Card Expenses_RMitchell.pdf
5. Prepaid Card-MBadcock.xlsx
6. PrepaidCard_3xInvoices_MBadcock.pdf
7. PrepaidCard_MBadcock_Invoice1of3.pdf
8. PrepaidCard_MBadcock_Invoice2of3.pdf
9. PrepaidCard_MBadcock_Invoice3of3.pdf
10. PrepaidCard_MBadcock_ITManager.pdf

The following two documents give information about expenditure and expenses during the period in question. Information has been withheld from these two documents to protect the privacy of former and current employees of the EPA:

1. Expenditure_March to May20_REDACTED_21Jul20.xlsx
2. Expense Claims_March_to_May_REDACTED_21July20.xlsx

I am unaware of any public interest in this information rendering it desirable for that information to be otherwise made available.

Travel expenses

Please note that all travel was undertaken in connection with the Environmental Protection Authority's regulatory functions, and was incurred for:

- Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) Board members
- Exclusive Economic Zone decision-making committee members
- Ngā Kaihautū Tikanga Taiao (the EPA's Statutory Māori Advisory Committee)
- HSNO Committee members.

Some travel expenditure was for travel that was subsequently cancelled, and for which the EPA has received travel credits.

Please note that due to the Covid-19 situation international travel (apart from travel to Australia) for staff members was suspended indefinitely from 27 February 2020, and to Australia on 12 March 2020. From 19 March 2020, any domestic travel required the approval of the Chief Executive.

Approximately \$22,000 of the \$26,000 spent over the March-May period was related to relocation expenses for four new staff, which is routine with some new staff who relocate from overseas to work for the EPA.

Equipment expenditure

Approximately \$10,000 was spent on new screens and mobile phones during March-May 2020. This equipment was purchased to facilitate remote working during the lockdown, but was accommodated within the normal replacement cycle. In addition, some members of staff were reimbursed for extra data or phone use as a result of working from home.

Some of the spend on furniture was for new chairs. One chair was purchased for a staff member to work from home. This staff member started having issues while sitting using a kitchen table chair. Due to this being a health and safety issue it was decided the easiest thing to do was to purchase a new chair and have it delivered to her house rather than trying to access the EPA offices. This chair is now back at the EPA offices. The remaining purchases were to replace old existing stock.

We will publish your request and our response on our website, www.epa.govt.nz within 10 working days from today. We make OIA responses available so others can read more about the work we do and the questions we are asked. Any information that might identify you will be removed to protect your privacy.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review of this decision by the Ombudsman. You can contact the Ombudsman on 0800 802 602, or by email at info@ombudsman.parliament.nz.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact us via ministerials@epa.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely



Philip Lim
General Manager
Finance and Systems