

12 August 2022

Dear [REDACTED]

Re: Official Information Act

I am responding on behalf of Te Whatu Ora Taranaki (formally Taranaki District Health Board (DHB)) to your OIA request of 20 July 2022. You have requested the following information:

1. *How many Oral Health Therapists are currently employed by the Te Whatu Ora | Health New Zealand - Taranaki (FTE and PTE), and how many positions are currently unfilled?*

As of 25 July 2022 10 Dental and Oral Health Therapists are currently employed by Te Whatu Ora Taranaki. Their combined FTE is 9.07, which leaves 7.76 vacant FTE.

2. *What is being done to fill the vacancies referenced in question one?*

Te Whatu Ora Taranaki has been actively recruiting for Dental and Oral Health Therapists. The organisation has established a trainee pathway which currently has four trainees studying Oral Health Therapy at Otago and AUT. The trainee pathway involves paid holiday work as chairside assistants with guaranteed employment after graduation, and retention payments being made at the end of years one, two and three.

3. *How far behind schedule are annual check up appointment lists for school dental services?*

Arrears are currently 50.4%, which involves 11,237 children across all age bands.

4. *What is the mean DMFT of children in Taranaki who are seen by school dental services?*

DMFT/dmft is only gathered for 5 year old and Year 8 children as required by Ministry of Health. Summary of data for Calendar year 2021 as provided to Ministry of Health in July 2022 is in the *Appendix*.

Please note: It should be noted that whilst almost all Year 8 children were seen, not all 5 year old children were. As those at increased risk of dental disease are prioritised, a significant number of lower risk 5 year old children may not have been seen, therefore without caries-free children included in the data set, the data may not be accurate.

5. *Are school dental services currently able to provide services other than relief of pain appointments?*

Community Oral Health Service continues to provide examination, preventive and intervention treatment options and dental services. However, the number of available appointments has been significantly affected due to the impact of COVID-19 and vacant FTE in the Therapy workforce.

6. *When can residents of New Plymouth and wider Taranaki expect to have our water fluoridated?*

In November 2021 the government announced from 2022 onwards the Director-General of Health would be able to direct local body councils regarding drinking water supplies being fluoridated. The date the Director-General has given New Plymouth District Council to fluoridate the drinking water supplies is 01 July 2023.

Stratford, Hawera and Waverley are currently receiving drinking water from a fluoridated supply, whilst Patea's drinking water supplies are programmed to be fluoridated in the near future.

7. *What is the current GA waitlist for children awaiting dental care?*

There are currently 69 children on the GA waiting list.

8. *How many children in Taranaki have received a full dental clearance in the last two years?*

No children have required a full dental clearance in the last two years.

I trust this information answers your OIA request.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the Te Whatu Ora Taranaki (www.tdhb.org.nz) website no less than one week after the response has been provided to you. Any personal or identifying information will be redacted from any response published online. Te Whatu Ora Taranaki will endeavour to resolve any concerns you should raise but, subject to any legal grounds for withholding, ultimately reserves the right to publish any information.

Kind regards



Katy Sheffield
Acting Chief Operating Officer
Taranaki District

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Appendix

Dental Health Status of 5-year old Children	Number of children examined	Mean dmft
All 5-year old Children	1,083	1.67
All Maori 5-year old Children	397	2.42
All Pacific 5-year old Children	30	2.7
All "Other" 5-year old Children	656	1.17
All Fluoridated 5-year old Children	188	1.28
All Non-Fluoridated 5-year old Children	895	1.75
Maori Fluoridated 5-year old Children	78	1.76
Maori Non-fluoridated 5-year old Children	319	2.58
Pacific Fluoridated 5-year old Children	1	0.00
Pacific Non-fluoridated 5-year old Children	29	2.79
Other Fluoridated 5-year old Children	109	0.94
Other Non-fluoridated 5-year old Children	547	1.21

Dental Health Status of Year 8 Children	Number of children examined	Mean DMFT
All Year 8 Children	1,576	0.60
All Maori Year 8 Children	456	0.80
All Pacific Year 8 Children	30	0.37
All "Other" Year 8 Children	1,090	0.52
All Fluoridated Year 8 Children	267	0.65
All Non-Fluoridated Year 8 Children	1,309	0.59
Maori Fluoridated Year 8 Children	97	0.77
Maori Non-fluoridated Year 8 Children	359	0.81
Pacific Fluoridated Year 8 Children	2	0.00
Pacific Non-fluoridated Year 8 Children	28	0.39
Other Fluoridated Year 8 Children	168	0.59
Other Non-fluoridated Year 8 Children	922	0.51