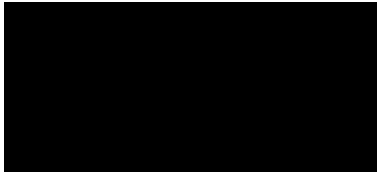



21 August 2023

C170153



Tēnā koe 

Thank you for your email of 30 June 2023 to the Department of Corrections – Ara Poutama Aotearoa, requesting information about Corrections purchasing flowers and bottled water. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

You requested:

We request the following information:

- *Total expenditure on bottled water in 2022:*
 - *Please provide the total amount spent on bottled water, including the cost of procurement, delivery and any other associated expense.*
- *Total expenditure on bottled water from January 2023 up to and including June 2023.*

Corrections officers do an incredibly difficult and challenging job and come to work every day to keep New Zealanders safe. As an organisation, our role is to support the safety and wellbeing of our staff. It's important to invest in the areas that will make a real difference to them and their ability to keep safe and do their job properly, while always being conscious of delivering value for money for taxpayers.

In recent years, summers have become increasingly hot with new regional temperature records being set in several regions across the country. It's no secret that prisons can be volatile, with over 75 percent of prisoners being convicted for the use violence at some point in their lives.

The heat, combined with a number of other factors, there is the potential for increased prisoner tension and aggression, and the real risk that a staff member or prisoner would be seriously hurt. We have a duty of care to prisoners and staff, and are legislatively obliged to operate prisons that are safe for everyone.

To mitigate the situation, we took a number of steps, including:

- Ensuring that frontline staff had the ability to take breaks every few hours in a cool location, with the opportunity to safely remove their six kilogram stab resistant vests.
- Providing staff with access to cold water, hand held fans and cold flannels to place on the backs of their necks.
- Considering opportunities to increase prisoners' time out of their cells.
- Providing prisoners with increased access to cold showers.
- Ensuring that all staff were aware of the signs of heat exhaustion and dehydration to ensure that they could intervene immediately if anyone was showing signs of being unwell.

These actions, combined with the efforts of our staff, were effective – with no major incidents occurring despite the conditions.

Additionally, Corrections provides bottled water to people who are transferred between prisons, so they have access to water while contained in the Prisoner Escort Vehicle. For example, people may be transferred between a prison based in Auckland to a prison in Wellington via a Prisoner Escort Vehicle. These escorts stop off at prisons and Police stations along the route for rest and toileting breaks, but bottled water is provided to people while they are in the vehicle. For context, 13,295 people were transferred between prisons in 2022.

Item	1 January to 31 December 2022	1 January to 30 June 2023
Bottled water	\$259,716	\$41,257

- *Total expenditure on flowers in 2022:*
 - *Please provide the total amount spent on flowers, including any cost related to procurement, arrangements and maintenance.*
- *Total expenditure on flowers from January 2023 up to and including June 2023.*

Corrections has a Sensitive Expenditure Policy which includes guidance on giving gifts to staff to mark events. As part of this, Corrections can make contributions to appropriate gifts such as flowers or a gift basket up to the value of \$100 including GST. Gifts, including flowers, may be given to Corrections staff:

- when a staff member is leaving the Department,
- as recognition for long service,
- to acknowledge a significant life event such as the birth of a baby, civil union, marriage, a bereavement or serious illness,
- to acknowledge performance or success.

All expenditure must be pre-approved by a delegated authority. For context, Corrections employs approximately 9,300 people. Please see the below table for the amount spent on flowers from 1 January 2022 to 30 June 2023:

Item	1 January to 31 December 2022	1 January to 30 June 2023
Flowers	\$36,119	\$20,524

Please note that this response may be published on Corrections' website. Typically, responses are published quarterly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

I trust the information provided is of assistance. I encourage you to raise any concerns about this response with Corrections. Alternatively, you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Contact details are: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Ngā mihi



Leigh Marsh
National Commissioner