

11 May 2026

Tēnā koe [REDACTED],

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation (DOC), received on 10 April 2026, in which you asked for:

“OIA on consultants:

- 1. Can I please OIA how much was spent on consultants in 2025 and how much was spent in 2024?*
- 2. Please list each consultant/consultancy, and
 - i. the amount spent*
 - ii. and the purpose of the work*
 - iii. and duration of their work, for 2025.**

OIA on contractors:

- 1. Can I please OIA how much was spent on contractors for 2025, and how many contractors were employed in 2025, compared to 2024*
- 2. Please break this number down to the purpose or occupation the contractor(s) were employed for (i.e. business analyst, architect) for 2025*
- 3. How many of these contractors employed in 2025 worked/work at the organisation longer than six months?*

OIA on restructures:

- 1. Please provide any post-restructure reviews conducted in the last year (from April 4, 2026)*
- 2. Please list the number of restructures conducted in that time frame
 - i. the group the restructure relates to*
 - ii. and the purpose of the restructure.**
- 3. Please provide any figures held on the estimated cost and savings of restructuring throughout 2025.”*

We have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982.

On 23 April 2026, we advised that information relating to payments under \$10,000 could not be made available due to the manual collation required. As noted in our update of 5 May 2026, we have since been able to collate this information and have included it in our response.

You requested information based on calendar years. However, the source data for expenditure over \$10,000 is collected and analysed annually and provided for review by the Public Service Commission (PSC) on a financial-year basis. As a result, the information has been supplied by

financial year. We expect this approach to be consistent with data provided by other government departments.

Consultants/ Contractors

DOC engages contractors, consultants and professional service providers where specialist expertise, additional capacity, or time-limited capability is required and where it is not cost-effective or appropriate to permanently retain these skills in-house. Engagements are predominantly fixed-term and project-based, and subject to internal procurement and approval processes. They are used to support delivery of priority programmes, significant projects, specialist technical work, and temporary backfill requirements.

As a frontline delivery organisation with a large and geographically dispersed asset base, DOC also uses specialist external providers to support infrastructure delivery, asset maintenance, regulatory improvement work, digital change initiatives, and other operational priorities.

Organisational change

Like other government agencies, DOC has been directed to find savings from its baseline through Budget 2024 and Budget 2025. In response, DOC has made difficult decisions and tried to minimise the impact on staff and conservation outcomes, while also adapting how it organises and delivers work to manage future cost pressures. Over the period covered by your request, (5 April 2025 – 4 April 2026), the Department has carried out 10 organisational change processes in various parts of the organisation, one of which is still underway. Most of these organisational change processes were driven by the need to adapt to evolving business needs, strategic direction, new Ministerial priorities or operational requirements; only two have included the specific purpose of cost savings (Support Review and Regional Operations).

DOC does not routinely conduct formal post-implementation reviews. Instead, organisational structures are reviewed on an ongoing basis through business planning and regular operating reviews between managers and staff. This enables resourcing and performance to be continuously assessed against business plans and strategic priorities, rather than fixed organisational structures.

The type of review undertaken depends on the scale and impact of the change. Significant organisational changes that alter workflows or job design are more likely to be subject to a formal post-implementation review. Minor changes, such as changes to reporting lines, are less likely to require one. Information on restructures and redundancy costs is provided through Select Committee Estimates and Annual Review processes and is publicly available on the Parliamentary website.

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

Consultants

1. **Can I please OIA how much was spent on consultants in 2025 and how much was spent in 2024?**

In the 2025 financial year, total expenditure on consultants was \$17,072,977.73. In comparison, total expenditure on consultants in the 2024 financial year was \$32,392,915.50. This was a decrease of 47% in 2025 compared with 2024.

2. **Please list each consultant/consultancy, and**
 - i. **the amount spent**
 - ii. **and the purpose of the work**
 - iii. **and duration of their work, for 2025.**

Please refer to **Appendix 1**, attached, which contains the requested information for consultancy engagements in the 2025 financial year. Figures are based on payments recorded in DOC's financial systems.

Some consultancy engagements started prior to the 2025 financial year or continue beyond 2025. Where this applies, only expenditure relating to the 2025 financial year has been included.

Contract duration reflects contract start and end dates recorded in our systems. In some cases, dates may be listed as "Various," "Ongoing," or "Not available" where multiple engagements exist or complete contract information is not held centrally. Collating this material would require substantial collation or research. Therefore, this aspect of your request is refused in accordance with s18(f) of the Act.

Contractors

1. **Can I please OIA how much was spent on contractors for 2025, and how many contractors were employed in 2025, compared to 2024**

Contractors engaged during 2025 were employed across a range of specialist and operational roles.

The total expenditure on contractors for the 2025 financial year was NZD \$14,673,163.33.

Financial Year	Number of Contractors
2025	154
2024	175

2. Please break this number down to the purpose or occupation the contractor(s) were employed for (i.e. business analyst, architect) for 2025

Please refer to **Appendix 2** which contains the requested information for contractor engagements in the 2025 financial year. Figures are based on payments recorded in DOC's financial systems.

A person is considered a contractor if all of the following apply:

- is engaged on a contract for service, either directly (self-employed) or via a third party (recruitment agency), and is not an employee; and
- is paid upon provision of a GST invoice through their own managed entity or third party recruitment agency; and
- is providing backfill or extra capacity in a role that exists within the agency or acts as an additional resource for a time-limited piece of work (project work); and
- is under the direct supervision of the agency and the agency is responsible for ensuring that the required deliverables and performance standards are met

There are a small number of individual contractors (sole traders) paid through our Payroll system for tax reasons. We have not included these individuals in the information provided in relation to your query as they don't align with the Public Service Commission's data reporting standards in relation to contractor and consultant expenditure and would it require substantial research and collation to compile this information. This ensures the information we provide you aligns with central reporting standards for comparability across the Public Service.

3. How many of these contractors employed in 2025 worked/work at the organisation longer than six months?

In 2025, DOC engaged 75 contractors for periods exceeding six months, based on contract engagement records across reporting periods.

Restructures

1. Please provide any post-restructure reviews conducted in the last year (from April 4, 2026)

DOC has not completed any formal post-restructure reviews in the past year. Therefore, this aspect of your request is refused in accordance with s18(e) of the Act as the information you have requested does not exist. While formal reviews are limited, we regularly capture informal feedback from managers and staff through our business planning processes and, in some cases, use this to guide further business improvements that may result in subsequent organisational change.

2. Please list the number of restructures conducted in that time frame

i. the group the restructure relates to

ii. and the purpose of the restructure.

Change processes often take time to complete and may continue to have impacts after decisions are made, particularly where staff exit the organisation. For this request, we have included changes that are underway or completed and excluded proposals that are still subject to consultation or decision-making.

Since 5 April 2025, DOC has undertaken 10 change processes in a variety of teams. Please note that not all change processes are related to cost savings, and neither are they organisation-wide restructures.

Restructure Name	Business Group	Purpose of the Restructure
Jobs for Nature	Public Affairs	Support sustainable long-term delivery of conservation work through more effective use of funding and resources.
BHV Review	Biodiversity, Heritage and Visitors	Support sustainable long-term delivery of conservation work through more effective use of funding and resources.
Integrated Planning and Reporting	Office of Director General	Refinement of the team's scope and focus to better align with priority work.
Regional Operations	Regional Operations	Support sustainable long-term delivery of frontline conservation work by simplifying ways of working in Regional Operations and using resources more effectively.
Rakiura District		Combined district model enabling DOC to use funding and resources more effectively for conservation work on Rēkohu
Chatham Island		
Support Review	Organisational Support	Changes to the support network structure to clarify roles and simplify ways of working, supporting sustainable long-term delivery through more effective use of resources as new systems and technology are introduced.
Health Safety and Aviation Risk Team		Refocus ways of working to support sustainable long-term delivery by prioritising work and making more effective use of existing resources as the organisation transitions to new operating models.

Restructure Name	Business Group	Purpose of the Restructure
Asset Management Unit and Enterprise Portfolio Management Office Change		Provide clearer roles, greater team autonomy, and stronger support to enable more effective delivery of priority work and management of change across DOC.
Organisation Support leadership realignment		Leadership realignment within Organisation Support to improve alignment of roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities.

3. Please provide any figures held on the estimated cost and savings of restructuring throughout 2025.

DOC does not hold estimated figures on cost savings from all restructures, as not all were undertaken for the purpose of achieving financial savings. We can advise that, of the 10 restructures referred to in our responses above, two included cost savings in their purpose and have delivered savings as follows:

- The Support Review has saved approximately \$3.7m this year offset by a cost of approximately \$1.8m. The expected annual savings from next year are approximately \$5.5m.
- The Regional Operations Review has saved approximately \$2.5m this year offset by a cost of approximately \$1.0m. The expected annual savings from next year is approximately \$5m.

As we do not hold information regarding estimated cost savings for other restructures undertaken in 2025, your request in respect of this information is refused in accordance with s18(e) of the Act as the information does not exist.

Item	Date	Document description	Decision
1	06/05/2026	Appendix 1: Consultant Expenditure	Released in part.
2	06/05/2026	Appendix 2: Contractors	Released in full.

I have decided to release the relevant parts of the documents listed above, subject to some information being withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act to protect the privacy of natural persons.

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the OIA and determined there are no public interests that outweigh the grounds for withholding.

You are entitled to seek an investigation and review of my decision by writing to an Ombudsman as provided by section 28(3) of the OIA.

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

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of connected loops and a final horizontal stroke.

Nick Mayo
Chief Financial Officer
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai