

Canterbury

District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora o Waitaha

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Email: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

RE Official information request CDHB 9798

I refer to your email dated 19 February 2018 requesting information under section 12 of the Official Information Act from Canterbury DHB pertaining to the Passive Fire Protection Programme.

Background

Canterbury DHB elected to undertake a passive fire assessment of part of its building infrastructure following the Canterbury Earthquakes. Potential passive fire compliance issues were identified as part of stage one assessment. In light of those findings, a decision was made to:

1. undertake a full assessment of the passive fire systems across the Canterbury DHB buildings;
2. undertake rectification works where required to ensure compliance with current code; and
3. implement appropriate systems and processes to ensure that the integrity of passive fire systems (both legacy and new) continue to be maintained.

While there have been passive fire issues identified as part of this stage one assessment (this was expected given the age of the buildings, the work undertaken on the buildings and the changes to the Building Code over time), it is important to note that Canterbury DHB maintains a fully compliant active fire systems and holds a current Building Warrant of Fitness for its Hospital campus.

It has become very evident from the work done to date that the current passive fire industry is unregulated and has no fixed training or accreditation / licensing. The Canterbury DHB, after consultation with MBIE (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment) and FPANZ (Fire Protection Association of New Zealand), decided to trial a passive fire protection accreditation programme with selected installers and suppliers. This programme will be beneficial for both the Canterbury DHB and wider industry.

Requested Information

We respond to your questions as follows:

1. Why is the passive fire protection programme being done?

Following the Canterbury Earthquakes and subsequent building inspections, Canterbury DHB became aware of potential passive fire issues. Further investigations with our fire engineers identified that passive fire protection in certain areas of Canterbury DHB buildings had been compromised. As noted above, this was not entirely unexpected given the age of the buildings, the work undertaken on the buildings and the changes to the Building Code over time. A rectification programme is underway as a result and systems are being implemented to ensure the integrity of passive fire systems is maintained going forward.

2. What does it entail?

The passive fire programme is a multi-layer operation that includes:

- changing design and procurement methodology to identify and mitigate risk;
- highlighting the importance of passive fire to third parties working within our buildings;
- monitoring performance of designers, installers and sub trades working within our buildings;
- monitoring and recording all works that may affect fire protection;
- developing protocols and management tools that can be expanded for other sectors; and
- improving the current standards of workmanship and reducing the risk of further damage from parties that are unaware of the requirements of passive fire protection.

Ultimately, Canterbury DHB is working towards passive fire systems that comply with today's Building Code and have systems and processes in place to ensure that the integrity of those systems is maintained.

3. What CDHB facilities will this need to be done at?

The programme will look at all Canterbury DHB facilities, old and new. The difficulty is that much of the passive fire systems are behind walls and investigation and rectification work needs to work around clinical needs.

4. How much is this passive fire protection programme expected to cost?

At this stage this information is unknown as we are still in the infancy of the programme and must complete complex and time consuming investigations and analysis into each building.

5. When will the programme begin?

Inspections commenced in 2015 and the rectification programme commenced in 2016.

6. Are the facilities affected at any risk of fire currently?

It is important to note that fire protection comprises two elements:

- (i) "Active" being the detection and sprinkler systems to actively extinguish the fire; and
- (ii) "Passive" being the systems such as fire walls to slow the spread of fire and smoke.

Every building is at risk of fire. The question is how those risks are managed by the building owner.

All Canterbury DHB buildings have fully compliant active fire protection and hold current Building Warrants of Fitness (BWOFF) as certified by the Christchurch City Council annually. All Canterbury DHB

buildings are extensively monitored, regularly inspected, have comprehensive evacuation procedures and well trained staff.

7. Why are they not compliant currently?

Passive fire protection is a secondary layer of protection after the detection systems and sprinklers and is there to reduce the spread of flames and smoke to other areas of the buildings.

Canterbury DHB has identified areas within its buildings that have passive fire installations that are non-compliant with today's Building Code. This may be due to a number of reasons. Some legacy buildings may have been compliant at the time of construction but given changes to the Building Code over time, may not be compliant with today's code. Equally, Canterbury DHB has had years of contractor work within its buildings where, for example, non-compliant penetrations to fire walls for services have occurred.

I trust that this satisfies your interest in this matter.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the Canterbury DHB website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carolyn Gullery', with a long, sweeping underline.

Carolyn Gullery
General Manager
Planning, Funding & Decision Support