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## Parliament protest costs police more than \$2.5 million

By Abbey Wakefield, Breakfast Reporter

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# (Wakefield, 2022)

1News can reveal that New Zealand police spent more than \$2.5 million in response to the protest at Parliament.



Police in riot gear turned up in force with the anti-mandate protest now in its fourth week.

Earlier this year, Parliament was occupied by anti-mandate protesters for nearly a month.

The occupation ended with a violent standoff between **police and protesters**, resulting in hundreds of arrests, parts of Parliament's grounds set on fire and pavers ripped from the footpath.



The money was spent on things like accommodation, food supplies, towing consumables, airfares, vehicles, venues and helicopter hire costs. (Source: 1News)

02:21

Information released under the Official Information Act shows that police spent over \$1 million on accommodation, over \$600,000 on travel, and just under \$300,000 on food.

Just under \$200,000 was spent on hired or purchased equipment, and over \$50,000 on external providers.







Police Commissioner Andrew Coster says there are some important lessons from the protest. (Source: 1News)

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"These costs cover expenditure incurred directly in response to the protest such as accommodation, food supplies, towing consumables, airfares and vehicles, venues and helicopter hire costs. It does not include any personnel costs of the staff assigned to this operation," a police spokesperson said.

The **Independent Police Conduct Authority** is currently conducting an independent investigation and review of the police response to events, which is expected to be completed by March 2023.

Police have received 598 complaints in relation to the Parliament protest.

"Of the 598 complaints, 148 related to police inaction, typically wanting police to do more typically wanting police to do more to remove protesters from Parliament grounds," a police spokesperson said.

**Assistant Commissioner Richard Chambers** said previously 600 officers were involved on March 2 - the final day of the occupation. Stuff reported just over 1800 police staff were seconded to Wellington during the protests.

In a statement, Police Minister Poto Williams said it was "incumbent on police to police illegal activity".

"This was the largest and longest protest on Parliament grounds ever, and police would have not spent the money if the protesters had stayed at home."



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