

Subject: OIA 2024/02: Request for data on wildfires in New Zealand
Date: Wednesday, 13 March 2024 at 5:09:08 PM New Zealand Daylight Time
From: Wendy McGuinness <wmcg@mcguinnessinstitute.org>
To: officialinformationrequests@fireandemergency.nz
<officialinformationrequests@fireandemergency.nz>
CC: Molly Woods <mw@mcguinnessinstitute.org>, Josie McGuinness
<jm@mcguinnessinstitute.org>
Attachments: Report-99-The-economic-cost-of-wildfires.pdf, OIA 2017.4189 Response ltr.pdf, Wildfire data tables.xlsx

Attention: Kerry Gregory, Chief Executive, Fire and Emergency New Zealand

Kia ora Kerry,

Our OIA 2024/02: Request for data on wildfires in New Zealand

The Institute is currently in the process of writing a discussion paper on wildfires. It is now in draft, and we have identified a few outstanding data gaps. I am writing to see if your team could help us with these.

Once the data is included, I would like to send you an early copy of the draft and ideally meet with you or your team. Is this of interest?

A: Background

We are aware of the following papers, many of which are quite old:

- a. A series of 'Wildfire Season Update' reports prepared by SCION. These include two reports: 2019/2020 and 2020/21. Furthermore, we note that the 2020/21 report shows the area burned by type of land use (see p. 5). We would appreciate additional information by vegetation type: grass, scrub, forest (plantation) and forest (indigenous).
- b. A 2009 research paper published by the New Zealand Fire Service Commission. This paper gave a detailed breakdown of total economic costs of wildfires from 2002 to 2007, listing pre-suppression, suppression, and after-fire costs. See report attached (see p. 26).
- c. Your OIA 2017.4189 letter in response to an old OIA letter (attached). We noted the breakdown by vegetation type for the years 2015/16 and 2016/17 did not equate to the total area burned. The figures for FY 2015/16 left 0.08 Ha unaccounted for and the FY 2016/17 left 1000 Ha unaccounted for. **Q1:** Is there a reason for these? We would like to use this data in a diagram.
- d. Operational reports on individual fires (e.g. the 2020 Lake Ōhau Operational Review)
- e. Briefs to the Incoming Government
- f. FENZ Annual reports

Q2: Are there any more recent reports that we should be aware of? Are there any reports in progress?

B: Questions are set out in four tables in Excel

Given the above, would your team be able to complete the data gaps in our four tables and return by email. The table titles are as follows:

Q3: What is the area burned annually? See Table 1: Area burned (Ha)

Note: We have assumed you have a category for total peatland/wetland or is it included in one of the other categories?

Q4: What is the estimated annual emissions from these fires? See Table 2: Total wildfire emissions (Megatonnes)

Q5: What are the estimated annual costs of these fires? See Table 3: Economic costs of wildfires.

Q6: Can you tell us more about the three largest wildfires over the last ten years? See Table 4: Area burned (Ha), total emissions (Mt) and total economic cost of the three largest wildfires of each wildfire season.

Any of the information above would be terrific. If you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you would like to talk this through, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Ngā mihi,

Wendy McGuinness

McGuinness Institute Te Hononga Waka

Level 1, 15 Allen Street, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 24-222 Wellington 6142
+64 4 499 8888 | www.mcguinnessinstitute.org

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