

**From:** [BDC Lgoima](#)  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Official Information Request for Kawatiri Dredge - Crew Costs Ref: OIA 068/25  
**Date:** Thursday, 17 July 2025 8:53:57 am

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Dear [REDACTED]

We refer to your official information request dated 7 July 2025 regarding the Kawatiri Dredge Crew Costs.

Please see BDC responses marked in red below:

*We have now been told six crew were on 80 percent of their full day rate pay for six months, during which time they weren't required to work.  
Is this correct and what was the total cost?*

**This is incorrect.**

Three contractors and one employee were offered, and accepted, fixed term (26<sup>th</sup> July – 10<sup>th</sup> Jan 2025) contracts at half (50%) of their standard daily rate.

During this period the crew were required to be on call, and attend the vessel within 48 hours if required, for the entire fixed term period. However, due to the Manahau grounding they were only required for 53 days of the possible 91 days that the fixed term contract allowed.

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During this period the crew undertook the following work:

- Annual dredging in Nelson
- Dredging in Westport for Western Mineral Sands crossings
- Maintenance dredging in Westport
- Kawatiri maintenance

*If not, could council provide the correct figures please?*

**Total including travel = \$345,219.61**

*Do the contractor costs provided by council for the dredge crew include travel, accommodation, food etc? If not, may I have those figures?*

**Yes, contractor costs include travel, and where applicable, reimbursements. Food is provided by the council in the quantity and quality required by International Maritime Labour Convention.**

*We've been told the dredge crew were allowed to spend up to \$2000 in food a week at Westport New World. Is this correct?*

**This is incorrect.**

**Typically, the crew stores cost is between \$25 and \$30 per person per day.**

**Total food costs for the 53 days were \$4781.80, which equates to \$90.22 per day for six crew members. This equates to \$15 per day, per crew member.**

*We've been told Dredgemaster Steve Christieson was an agent for the Chinese components used in the \$800,000 rebuild. If that's the case, did Mr Christieson declare a conflict of interest?*

**This is not correct.**

*We have also been told that when Mr Christieson contracts foreign crew for the dredge he charges council about \$1200 a day, then pays the crew the minimum wage. Is this correct?*

This is not correct.

*We understand the council has two employees who also work on the dredge. Is this correct and how much extra does this add to the dredge personnel costs?*

All dredge crew have the option of being employees or contractors. Traditionally, there has been one permanent casual employee, and from time to time, casual employees as required. Crew who are employees are paid at an hourly rate that is 10% less than the contracted rate, recognising that employees are entitled to leave benefits.

We refer to your email dated 4 July

*Sorry, I'm a bit confused by this answer. Does it mean some crew on the Kawatiri roster were not required to work but remained on full pay for eight months?*

Explanation above.

*If so, how many crew and how much (in total) were they paid while not working?*

Explained above.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact the Buller District Council by return email to [lgoima@bdc.govt.nz](mailto:lgoima@bdc.govt.nz).

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Our response to your request may be published at <https://bullerdc.govt.nz/district-council/your-council/request-for-official-information/responses-to-lgoima-requests/> with your personal information removed.

Kind regards

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