



26 February 2019



Dear [REDACTED]

Re: OIA request – car parking fees

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received 31 January 2019 seeking details of car parking at Waitemata District Health Board (DHB) facilities.

By way of background, Waitemata DHB has the largest resident population of any DHB in New Zealand, currently standing at more than 630,000 people. We have a workforce of more than 7,500 people spread across more than 80 sites across the Waitemata district and beyond.

In addition to providing care to our own resident population, we are the Northern Region provider of forensic mental health services and child rehabilitation services, plus the metro Auckland provider of child community dental services and community alcohol and drug services.

Our general approach to paid parking is to balance the need to maintain existing infrastructure and fund facilities required to meet the needs of our rapidly growing population with recognition that the cost of parking can be challenging for some people.

Public parking fees are in place at our Karaka Street, North Shore Hospital and Waitakere Hospital campuses. Staff also pay at these facilities, as well as at Mason Clinic (where visitor parking remains free).

The DHB's existing parking facilities are under significant pressure and further investment is required in the near future to keep pace with rising demand.

DHBs do not receive funding for car parking infrastructure and reductions to parking tariffs would effectively see precious healthcare dollars used to subsidise parking.

Setting our public parking fees at a rate consistent with neighbouring parking facilities also prevents hospital parking from becoming the low-cost option of choice for customers and staff at nearby businesses, such as the Smales Farm business hub.

This approach ensures spaces intended for patients and their families are less likely to be taken by people who do not have need to visit our sites.

Waitemata DHB does a significant amount to assist with car parking costs - waiving more than 63,000 parking fees (worth up to \$1.29 million in foregone revenue) over the last year.

In addition, in the first half of the 2018 calendar year, more than 494,000 cars left the DHB's hospital sites without paying under the free 20-minute grace period – the longest such period at any hospital across the greater Auckland region.

A further 124,200 vehicles left after paying the minimum tariff of \$4. Grace period and minimum tariff exits combined accounted for around 65 per cent of all hospital exits.

To further assist those experiencing hardship, a Congress ticket is offered allowing applicants free entry and exit for one week, provided their personal situation meets the DHB's compassionate parking guidelines. Another option is the issuing of discretionary one-off exit tickets allowing people to leave the DHB's hospital sites free-of-charge, provided their situations also comply with the compassionate parking guidelines.

Out of recognition there were still some people finding the cost of parking difficult to meet, in October 2018, the Board expanded compassionate parking options with the introduction of a new discretionary \$50 weekly car parking ticket. This option assists visitors who are ineligible for free parking but whose exceptional circumstances warrant a compassionate approach.

Responses to your specific questions are provided below.

- *I request the following information for each of the 2015/16, 2016/17, and 2017/18 financial years:*

1. *The total revenue from patients and visitors paying to park their vehicles in any DHB parking space.*

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
\$1,952,659	\$2,091,083	\$2,299,348

2. *Are any parking spaces provided to employees? If so, what is the total economic value of the parks?*

A total of 1,453 staff parking spaces are provided at North Shore Hospital and 579 at Waitakere Hospital. All staff pay for parking. The revenue received from staff is set out in the following answer.

3. *The total revenue collected from employee parking spaces.*

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
\$2,858,100	\$3,549,825	\$3,772,889

4. *The total number of DHB parking spaces.*

In 2017/18, there were a total of 3,228 parking spaces.

5. *The total revenue generated from fines and infringement fees as a result of staff, patients, and visitors parking their vehicles improperly.*

No revenue from such.

6. *The total number of fines and infringement notices issued. Please also disclose the number of fines and infringement notices that were waived.*

No infringement notices were issued.

7. *The total cost of the DHB's parking enforcement system. Please ensure to include any payments or wages made to contractors or staff to patrol the DHB parking spaces.*

Costs for managing enforcement, traffic management, patient, staff and visitor queries are provided below, including all capital costs (depreciation, insurance, interest) and maintenance costs.

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
\$3,299,863	\$3,139,829	\$2,792,053

Taxpayer funding is not applied to the creation of parking facilities, accordingly any cash generated from parking charges is used to improve or expand car parking facilities. During 2016/17 the DHB spent \$700,000 on parking facilities at Waitakere Hospital, a further \$364,000 in 2017/18 on improvements to parking at Karaka Street and Mason Clinic, and are planning to spend \$650,000 on additional parking at North Shore Hospital in 2019. In the 2019/20 financial year the DHB estimates it will spend a further \$2 million on parking facilities. We are also planning a new multi-storey car park at the North Shore Hospital Campus as part of its ten year site redevelopment, this building is estimated to cost between \$50 to \$60 million.

8. *The current hourly charge for a user to park a vehicle in any DHB parking space. If parking is charged at a time interval other than hourly, please disclose the relevant interval(s) and charge(s).*

This information is already publicly available on the Waitemata DHB website:

<http://www.waitematadhb.govt.nz/patients-visitors/finding-your-way/parking/>

9. *A list of any parking concession charges or exemptions available to patients or visitors.*

Information about these options is provided above and is also publicly available in the compassionate parking guidance available on the Waitemata DHB website:

<http://www.waitematadhb.govt.nz/patients-visitors/compassionate-parking-guidancenew-page/>

Finally, please note that we encourage the use of public transport where appropriate by both visitors and staff. We also support our staff to consider cycling as a transport alternative or joining our award-winning car-pooling scheme matching staff who register for ride-sharing.

I trust that this information meets your requirements. Waitemata DHB, like other agencies across the state sector, supports the open disclosure of information to assist the public's understanding of how we are delivering publicly-funded healthcare.

This includes the proactive publication of anonymised Official Information Act responses on our website from 10 working days after they have been released.

If you feel that there are good reasons why your response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider this.

Yours sincerely



Robert Paine
Chief Financial Officer and Head of Corporate Services
Waitemata District Health Board