



21 MAR 2018



Dear 

On 5 February 2018, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *The amount of money spent on research into Vulnerable Children Predictive Modelling. Please provide a breakdown by components of the project ie. for each study, staff costs, and overall budget allowed to it in as much detail as possible. I'm talking about all of the work here: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/research/predictive-modelling/*
- *All internal and external correspondence relating to the decision not to go ahead with the Prospective Observational Study as planned. This includes emails, briefings, and memos before, during and after the decision was made and includes all correspondence to and from the Minister at that time (Anne Tolley) about the working*
- *Details of any predictive risk modelling work that has gone on since this time, and any reports or studies relating to this.*

On 14 February 2018, the Ministry transferred parts two and three of your request to the Ministry for Children, Oranga Tamariki who will respond directly to you.

As you may be aware, the research into the Vulnerable Children Predictive Modelling outlined on the web-page you refer to was made up of three main components; a feasibility study, an ethical review, and development of a research protocol for further research, part of which (the prospective observational study) did not proceed.

The feasibility study involved the Ministry undertaking research into the feasibility of using predictive risk modelling (PRM) to identify new-born children who are a high priority for preventive services.

The ethical review undertaken by Auckland UniServices provided specialist knowledge into the use of PRM tools in the context of child maltreatment, to identify ethical issues and how they can be resolved.

These components, together with the research protocol for further research, were all reviewed by international and local experts. Please note that Children's Action Plan (CAP) provided the funding for the review of the research protocol for further research.

As the feasibility study proceeded and the complexity of the work and the issues raised became clear, it was agreed that a greater level of expert peer review and academic advice and input than budgeted for was warranted. For this reason, the total amount spent exceeded the initially budgeted amount. For example, the costs of expert peer review for the feasibility study were larger than budgeted for, and there were additional costs associated with a supplementary study undertaken in partnership with external experts that sought to better understand over-representation of Māori children in child welfare data.

The following table shows a breakdown of the budget for the research into the Vulnerable Children Predictive Modelling outlined on the web page you refer to in your request. Please note that staff costs for the feasibility study are not included in this budget.

Item	Budget Amount (excluding GST)
Feasibility Study (including data purchase, advice and peer review)	\$55,000
Ethical Review (including peer review)	\$145,000
Review of the research protocol for further research, and further ethical review (to be funded by the CAP)	\$12,750
Total	\$212,750

The following table shows the amount spent on the research into the Vulnerable Children Predictive Modelling, broken down by component. Please note that this includes costs that have been recorded as PRM related. Staff costs for the feasibility study are not included in this table.

Component	Item	Amount spent (excluding GST)
Feasibility study	Costs of birth and death registration data supplied by the Department of Internal Affairs	\$26,304
	Costs of geocoding data	\$5,909
Ethical review	Auckland UniServices ethical reviews including 'Predictive risk modelling and child maltreatment: An ethical review' and 'Ethical issues for Māori in predictive risk modelling to identify new-born children who are at high risk of future maltreatment'	\$143,710
Advice and peer review across the research	Peer review and advice, meeting attendance and meeting costs across the feasibility study, ethical reviews, research protocol for further research, and supplementary study to better understand over-representation of Māori children in child welfare data.	\$53,967
Total		\$229,890

The Ministry established an in-house project team reprioritised from current resources for the feasibility study. In addition to these staff, after June 2013, there were project team staff costs associated with revisions to the feasibility study following peer review and advice, collaboration on the supplementary study undertaken to better understand over-representation of Māori children in child welfare data, and development of the research protocol for further research. In addition, a number of individuals in the Ministry and other agencies contributed to the research through advice, review, data supply or checking. These staff costs are not able to be itemised because these staff were also involved in other projects and the time spent on each project is not held. A project manager also worked across multiple projects and the exact share of their time allocated to Vulnerable Children Predictive Modelling is not recorded.

As you were advised on 6 March 2018, the Ministry is unable to provide the actual amount spent on staff, therefore your request for the total amount of money spent on the research into Vulnerable Children Predictive Modelling is refused under section 18(g) of the Official Information Act as the staff cost component of information you have requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation. The Ministry has considered providing you with an estimate of some staff costs, however due to the limitations mentioned above, this would not be robust.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider public shortly. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response concerning the Vulnerable Children Predictive Modelling, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



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