



3 November 2023

Tēnā koe

On 5 October 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- 1. Information on the current number of cases sitting in a back-log to be heard by the Benefits Review Committee for the Auckland Region;*
- 2. Information on the apparently slow progress in cases to be heard by the Benefits Review Committee for the Auckland Region (i. e. on reasons, available limited resources and other relevant details);*
- 3. Information on a likely approximate date I may be able to expect my case (in the back-log) to be heard, going by the progress experienced at this current time (based on case load progresses made over recent months). This is to offer me some form of guidance.*

In the interest of clarity, I will respond to each of your questions in turn.

- 1. Information on the current number of cases sitting in a back-log to be heard by the Benefits Review Committee for the Auckland Region;*

Please refer to the table in the attached **Appendix** which shows the number of Review of Decision (ROD) cases at internal review stage and Report to the Benefit Review Committee (BRC) stage as at 31 October 2023 2023.

- 2. Information on the apparently slow progress in cases to be heard by the Benefits Review Committee for the Auckland Region (i. e. on reasons, available limited resources and other relevant details);*

Please note the Ministry does not centrally record reasons contributing to a delay in a BRC hearing, and reasons for delay are not always noted on the file.

However, I can advise that there are a number of reasons why there may be delays in BRC hearings, for example unavailability of panel members or hearing

times within the following two weeks, or Ministry staff waiting for further information from the applicant or third parties (such as accountants).

3. *Information on a likely approximate date I may be able to expect my case (in the back-log) to be heard, going by the progress experienced at this current time (based on case load progresses made over recent months). This is to offer me some form of guidance.*

I understand the Manager Regional Business Support at Auckland Regional Office has contacted you to discuss how you would like to proceed with your Review of Decision application and a timeframe for the BRC Hearing has been scheduled.

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 and any attached documents available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry'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, 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.

Ngā mihi nui



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Diane Anderson
Manager
Client Advocacy and Review



Appendix

The number of Review of Decision (ROD) cases at internal review stage and Report to the Benefit Review Committee (BRC) stage as at 31 October 2023.

RODs cases at Internal Review stage and Report to BRC Stage - as at 31 October 2023									
BRC Region	RODs at IR stage	Average Age	Median Age	RODs at Report to BRC stage	Average Age	Median Age	Total	Average Age of Total (in days)	Median Age of Total (in days)
Auckland Central	18	63	21	66	93	71	84	86	57
Auckland North	7	10	5	30	204	72	37	168	56
Auckland South	27	44	27	30	138	77	57	93	63

Notes:

- Every ROD lodged with the Ministry, would potentially be heard by a BRC unless withdrawn by the applicant or overturned at an Internal Review
- Approximately 75% of ROD cases are resolved on an average every month, prior to being heard by a BRC.
- The above table comprises ROD data reported as at Internal Review stage or at Report to BRC stage as on 31 October 2023.
- Average age means the average of the number of days in the particular dataset, from date of lodgement to 31 Oct 2023.
- Median Age means the median age in the particular dataset, from date of lodgement to 31 Oct 2023
- The data is as per the monthly tables provided by the Planning and Analysis team.