



28 FEB 2019



On 17 January 2019, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *The total number of 70A sanctions overturned from January 2016 to present*
- *The total number of 70A sanctions overturned from January 2016 to present for which the Ministry has reason to believe AAAP was involved.*
- *The total number of 70A sanctions applied since January 2016.*
- *Please include breakdowns of the above by year, gender and ethnicity (separately)*

On 23 January 2019, you refined the part of your request that relates to overturned sanctions to refer only to those cases that went through the formal Review of Decision process. The Ministry does not hold information regarding reductions ended outside of this process in a way that can be reported.

On 30 January 2019, you further clarified that you were also seeking a regional breakdown of the data.

From 26 November 2018, section 70A of the Social Security Act 1964 has been replaced by section 192 of the Social Security Act 2018. The section requires the Ministry to reduce the payment of a main benefit in respect of a dependent child where the recipient fails to identify the other parent of the child. Section 193 of the Social Security Act 2018 provides a number of exemptions to these reductions where there is a good reason not to identify the other parent, such as where this would result in a risk of violence.

The Ministry's centralised reporting on Review of Decision cases began in July 2017. As such, the Ministry is unable to provide you with this data for the period January 2016 to 1 July 2017. Prior to this point, information regarding these cases is held on individual case files. In order to compile this information, Ministry staff would need to review thousands of individual case files. As such, your request for this information is refused under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act (the Act). The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry could respond to your request more fully given extra time or the ability to charge, but have determined that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

Please find attached table one which shows the total number of Review of Decision cases related to section 192 reductions that were overturned or partially upheld between 1 July 2017 and 31 December 2018 by financial year and the ethnicity of the client. Please note that all clients who have had a Review of Decision case in relation to a section 70A or section 192 reduction overturned or partially upheld are recorded as women.

Table two provides a breakdown of the number of section 70A and section 192 related Review of Decision cases overturned or partially upheld during the period by Work and Income region.

You will note that in these tables some regions and ethnicities have been grouped together. This is because the number of cases in those regions was extremely low and the release of this breakdown would risk identifying the individuals concerned. This information is therefore withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act in order to protect the privacy of natural persons. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information

Table three provides the number of section 70A and section 192 related Review of Decision cases overturned or partially upheld where Auckland Action Against Poverty (AAAP) or a known AAAP advocate was involved.

Table four, five, and six provide the total number of section 70A reductions and of individual clients with a section 70A reduction as at the end of June 2016, 2017, and 2018 by Work and Income region, gender, and ethnicity respectively. Please note that this pre-dated the legislation change and as such section 192 did not apply.

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](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding section 70A reductions, 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Cassandra Wise  
**Manager, Issue Resolution, Service Delivery**

**Table 1: The number of s 70A or s 192 related Review of Decision Cases in which the result is recorded as 'overturned' or 'partially upheld' by financial year and client ethnicity.**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>2017/18 financial year</b>	<b>2018/19 financial year</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>New Zealand Māori</b>	14	25	39
<b>NZ European</b>	11	11	22
<b>American</b>	0	1	1
<b>Chinese</b>	0	1	1
<b>Cook Island Māori</b>	1	1	2
<b>Fijian</b>	1	0	1
<b>Samoan</b>	1	1	2
<b>Tongan</b>	1	0	1
<b>Not stated</b>	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>70</b>

**Note:**

- Data regarding the 2018/2019 financial year is taken as at 31 December 2018.
- Ethnicity data is self-identified. Where more than one ethnicity is provided, the first ethnicity recorded is used for the purposes of this data.

**Table 2: The number of s 70A or s 192 related Review of Decision Cases in which the result is recorded as 'overturned' or 'partially upheld' by financial year and Work and Income region.**

<b>Work and Income region</b>	<b>2017/18 financial year</b>	<b>2018/19 financial year</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Auckland</b>	19	17	<b>36</b>
<b>Bay of Plenty</b>	0	1	<b>1</b>
<b>Canterbury</b>	2	2	<b>4</b>
<b>Central</b>	2	1	<b>3</b>
<b>Central Processing Unit</b>	0	1	<b>1</b>
<b>East Coast</b>	1	7	<b>8</b>
<b>National Office</b>	1	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Nelson</b>	3	0	<b>3</b>
<b>Northland</b>	1	2	<b>3</b>
<b>Taranaki</b>	0	4	<b>4</b>
<b>Waikato</b>	0	6	<b>6</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>70</b>

**Note:**

- Data regarding the 2018/2019 financial year is taken as at 31 December 2018.
- Two cases have their geographic location recorded as the Central Processing Unit and National Office. This is a result of the way these cases were progressed to the Review of Decision process and does not reflect the geographic location of the client.

**Table 3: The number of s 70A or s 192 related Review of Decision Cases in which the result is recorded as 'overturned' or 'partially upheld' represented by AAAP or an AAAP advocate by financial year and Work and Income region.**

<b>Work and Income region</b>	<b>2017/18 financial year</b>	<b>2018/19 financial year</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Auckland</b>	4	1	5
<b>Waikato</b>	0	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>

**Note:**

- Data regarding the 2018/19 financial year is taken as at 31 December 2018.
- This data includes all cases with an advocate recorded as 'AAAP', 'Auckland Action Against Poverty' or a known advocate for AAAP.

**Table 4: The number of working age caregivers with one or more s 70A reduction as at financial year end 2016-2018 by Work and Income region.**

Work and Income region	June 2016		June 2017		June 2018	
	Number of Caregivers	Number of Deductions	Number of Caregivers	Number of Deductions	Number of Caregivers	Number of Deductions
Wellington	730	877	705	860	652	805
Nelson	435	548	411	524	359	482
East Coast	1,111	1,359	1,065	1,361	931	1,217
Waikato	1,298	1,608	1,289	1,631	1,180	1,505
Southern	692	903	702	903	672	888
Taranaki	672	835	640	795	616	782
Northland	828	1,045	856	1,082	808	1,017
Bay of Plenty	1,464	1,820	1,264	1,589	1,126	1,426
Central	722	890	655	818	643	800
Auckland Metro	5,334	6,825	4,924	6,378	4,464	5,840
Canterbury	1,054	1,306	1,079	1,389	1,018	1,315
Other	10	10	63	68	39	41
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,350</b>	<b>18,026</b>	<b>13,653</b>	<b>17,398</b>	<b>12,508</b>	<b>16,118</b>

**Note:**

- 'Other' Work and Income region includes clients managed from non-regional service centres, such as Remote Services.
- Please note that this is a count of both clients and of reductions. A client may have more than one section 70A or section 192 reduction.

**Table 5: The number of working age caregivers with one or more s 70A reduction as at financial year end 2016-2018 by gender.**

Gender	June 2016		June 2017		June 2018	
	Number of Caregivers	Number of Deductions	Number of Caregivers	Number of Deductions	Number of Caregivers	Number of Deductions
Female	13,988	17,595	13,255	16,912	12,114	15,648
Male	362	431	398	486	394	470
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,350</b>	<b>18,026</b>	<b>13,653</b>	<b>17,398</b>	<b>12,508</b>	<b>16,118</b>

**Note:**

- Please note that this is a count of both clients and of reductions. A client may have more than one section 70A or section 192 reduction.

**Table 6: The number of working age caregivers with one or more s 70A reduction as at financial year end 2016-2018 by ethnicity.**

Ethnicity	June 2016		June 2017		June 2018	
	Number of Caregivers	Number of Deductions	Number of Caregivers	Number of Deductions	Number of Caregivers	Number of Deductions
Māori	7,553	9,496	7,202	9,255	6,511	8,434
NZ European	3,504	4,331	3,344	4,167	3,153	4,009
Pacific Island	1,998	2,613	1,833	2,383	1,628	2,164
Other	1,064	1,307	988	1,240	922	1,160
Unspecified	231	279	286	353	294	351
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,350</b>	<b>18,026</b>	<b>13,653</b>	<b>17,398</b>	<b>12,508</b>	<b>16,118</b>

**Note:**

- Please note that this is a count of both clients and of reductions. A client may have more than one section 70A or section 192 reduction.
- Ethnicity data is self-identified and multiple ethnicities may be chosen by an individual as fits their preference or self-concept. Where multiple ethnicities are selected, a single ethnicity is selected for reporting purposes based on a specific process to ensure vulnerable groups are represented.