



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

30 MAR 2021

On 24 February 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), information relating to statistics held by the Ministry in relation to the processing of Official Information Act requests.

The Act reflects the democratic principles of New Zealand Government. It was designed to progressively increase the availability of official information and to:

- increase public interest and understanding of the processes of Government, and promote public participation in the making of laws and policy
- promote transparent Government and the accountability of Ministers of the Crown and Government officials
- protect official information to the extent consistent with both the public interest and personal privacy.

The Ministry employs over 7,000 staff to provide services to over one million New Zealanders each year. The Ministry's Ministerial and Executive Services team supports and assists Ministers, the Ministry's Leadership Team and staff when responding to public interest regarding its work. The key role of the Act is to ensure accountability and transparency of the Ministry and to accurately convey Ministry information to the public in a timely manner.

For the sake of clarity, I will address each of your questions in turn.

1. Are the OIA statistics reported to TKM published on your agency's website, and if so, where?

The Official Information Act statistics relating to the Ministry are not published on the Ministry website. However, the wider statistics are compiled by Te Kawa Mataaho - Public Service Commission (PSC), which include specific data on Official Information Act requests completed by the Ministry.

The data shows that during the period 1 July 2020 to 31 December 2020, the Ministry completed a total of 998 requests, with 996 being responded to on or before the expiry of the legislative timeframe (a total of 99.8%). These statistics can be found on the PSC website at this link: www.publicservice.govt.nz/resources/official-information-statistics/.

Please note that direct enquiries from news media organisations made to the Ministry media team are considered Official Information Act requests and are typically responded to within 24 to 48 hours.

Where a media request cannot be answered within that time period, the media team will transfer the request into the formal Official Information Act request process to be responded to within 20 working days.

2. Are any additional statistics (such as those detailed below) published on your agency's website, and if so, where?

The Ministry does not publish Official Information Act request statistics on our website. These statistics, where compiled, are published by the PSC at the link provided in response to question one.

However, the Ministry does publish our Annual Report on our website each year, which includes statistics on Official Information Act requests received and responded to. The most recent report: *Annual Report 2019-2020*, can be found at this link: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/corporate/annual-report/2019-2020/index.html.

The Ministry also publishes responses to Official Information Act requests that are of a more general nature and which are believed to be of interest to the general public. These responses can be found at the following link: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/official-information-responses/responses-to-official-information-act-requests.html.

More information on how the Ministry handles and processes Official Information Act requests can also be found on the Ministry website at this link: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/official-information-responses/index.html.

3. Does the agency collect or report (please answer collect, report, or no):

a) the number of requests received

Collect and report.

b) the number of requests transferred in full

Collect and report.

c) the number of requests withdrawn

Collect.

d) the number of requests refused

Collect and report.

e) the number of requests granted in part

Collect and report.

f) the number of requests granted in full

Collect and report.

g) time taken from receipt of request to despatch of the official information or decision to refuse

Collect and report.

h) time taken from receipt to transfer

No. This information is not centrally held in the database.

4. Does the agency count the number of requests (please answer yes or no):

a) requesting urgent attention

No. This information is not centrally held in the database.

b) amended or clarified (within or outside the legislated seven-day time frame)

No. However, this information is recorded on notes within each file.

c) consulted another agency or 3rd party

No.

d) consulted Minister

Yes.

e) charged

Yes. It is not the Ministry's policy to charge for official information. In exceptional circumstances, charges may be invoked according to current legislation and after the consideration of relevant factors, including public interest in the information and whether the requestor will be able to pay the charge.

When considering charging, the Ministry refers to the Ministry of Justice Charging Guidelines, which can be accessed on the Ministry of Justice website here: www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/1982-Official-Information-Act-charging-guidelines.pdf.

f) extended

Yes.

g) notified to Minister

Yes.

h) where the statutory time-frame to transfer a request was met or not met

No. The only time that a request would not meet the statutory timeframe to be transferred is if it was not done within the 20-working day timeframe of the

Act, or, if it was not transferred before the extension timeframe of the response had elapsed.

A transfer can occur at any point within the response process, including after the final timeframe has expired. This is to ensure that a request for information is always able to reach the relevant agency.

i) where the statutory time-frame to notify an extension was met or not met

No. However, if an extension is not issued to the requestor within the initial 20 working day time period, then the request would constitute as being late.

j) where the statutory time-frame to seek amendment or clarification was met or not met

No. However, a request can be amended or clarified at any point in the response process. This includes after the request had been extended, or, even if the legislative timeframe has expired.

5. *Does the agency measure (please answer yes or no):*

a) time taken from receipt of request to decision regarding release of information

Yes.

b) time from receipt to seeking clarification

No.

c) time from receipt to notification of extension

No. This information is not centrally held in the database.

d) duration of extension

Yes.

e) time for agency or third-party response

No.

f) time for Minister response

Unfortunately, it is not clear what is meant by this question. If you are referring to when the Ministry gives a notification of an Official Information Act request to a Minister, then that information is recorded.

g) time from decision to release of information

Yes.

6. Does the agency have any system to classify requests by (please answer yes or no):

a) channel

b) gateway

Unfortunately, it is not clear what is meant by these terms. If you are referring to the way that the Ministry receives requests (i.e. through the www.FYI.org.nz website, through the Ministry website, via the Media team) then no, that information is not recorded centrally.

c) requester category

Yes. The Ministry classifies when requests received by the following three sources:

- Individual
- Media
- Political

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

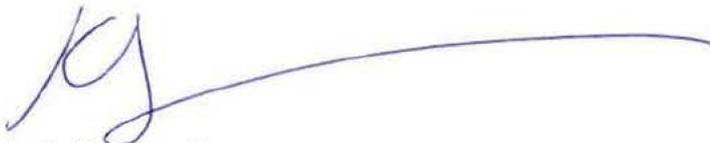
- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

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. 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 relating to the Ministry's processing of Official Information Act requests, 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



Kate Satterthwaite
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services