



Tēnā koe

On 27 October 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

1. *The time it takes Historic Claims to process a claim*
2. *The prioritisation of claims.*

For the sake of clarity, your questions are addressed in turn:

1. *The time it takes Historic Claims to process a claim*

I am advised that you have been told previously that there is a policy whereby clients are advised the processing of their claim will take four years. The Ministry does not have a legislative policy that outlines the timeframe a claim may take to be resolved. Each claim is viewed on a case-by-case basis, and the wait time for a claim will vary due to the volume of claims received by the Ministry, staff availability and instances where claimants may choose to delay the process.

It is likely that the timeframe you were provided with is the average wait time for a claim to be resolved. This was outlined in the Ministry's most recent annual report, whereby the average wait time for a claim to be resolved was 4.3 years. The Ministry expects to reduce this average in future.

The Historic Claims section of the annual report contains information on average wait times – at page 24-27 of the "Performance and financial statements and appendices" for the 2020 – 2021 Annual Report, see link below:

<https://annualreport2021.msd.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/documents/Performance-financial-statements-and-appendices.pdf>

2. *The prioritisation of claims*

Claims are allocated for assessment in the chronological order in which they are received in order to ensure fairness and equity across all claimants. However, requests made by a claimant, or their representative or agent, to have a claim prioritised may be considered by the Manager Claimant Support and Assessment in special circumstances and on a case-by-case basis at any stage in the claims process. Claims that may be considered for prioritisation include:

- claimants who are at high risk of dying before their claim is assessed if prioritisation was not to occur. Supporting information from a claimant's medical practitioner may be required; or,
- claimants who are at high risk of suicide before their claim is assessed if prioritisation was not to occur. Evidence from a claimant's clinician confirming this risk is required.

The Historic Claims Business Process Guide outlines our approach to the prioritization of claims and contains in depth information on the Historic Claims process. If you have any further questions, please contact us on 0800 631 127, or email us at historicclaims@msd.govt.nz.

For your convenience, I have included a link to the Historic Claims Business Process Guide available to the public through the Historic Claims section of the Ministry's website: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/historic-claims/

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



Linda Hrstich-Meyer
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Historic Claims