



11 February 2022

Tēnā koe

On 13 January 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *The entities that the Ministry is required to report to periodically as part of its maintenance of requests under the OIA. For example, perhaps entities such as the Audit Office, the Ombudsman, Te Kawa Mataaho or similar; and,*
- *Where I may find any statistics the Ministry may provide as to, for example, the number of requests received, the number for which the requested information was provided, and the number for which the requested information was not provided. In the latter case, I would particularly be interested in the reason given to the requestors.*
- *Under 1 and 2 above, I would then like the information available for the last two financial or reporting years. For example, if the Ministry needs to make assurances to the Audit Office or similar each year as to the integrity of its processes in managing the OIA requests, a copy of that would be of interest.*

The Ministry is required to provide information related to Official Information Act (OIA) responses to the following agencies:

- Te Kawa Mataaho (Public Service Commission) – This information is provided every six months in relation to the number of requests responded to, the number that did not meet statutory timeframes, the number of published responses, and the number of Ombudsman complaints received. You can access this information on their website: www.publicservice.govt.nz/resources/official-information-statistics.

- The Office of the Ombudsman – This information is provided in relation to specific requests for which the Ministry has received a complaint.
- The Ministry’s Annual Report – Each year the Ministry will provide a report on the organisation’s performance across a number of financial and non-financial appropriations. The Ministry’s Annual Reports are available on the Ministry’s website: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/corporate/annual-report/. Information relating to Ministerial work, including Ministerial OIA work completed by the Ministry, is available on pages 36-38.

When the Ministry is asked to provide information to the above agencies, we will also use this time to audit our system to ensure that the information collected, such as the date a request was received or the date a response was sent, is recorded correctly.

Regarding the second part of your request, the Ministry received the following amount of OIA requests:

Financial year	Number of requests received
2019/20	1,933
2020/21	2,165

Please note that, from the financial year 2018/19, the Ministry has included the number of media requests received and responded to in OIA reporting in line with the guidance from the Office of the Ombudsman.

At present, the Ministry records our outcomes on requests into three categories. The definitions of these outcomes are below:

- Granted in full – all information requested is provided in full with no information refused or withheld under any ground in section 6, 9 and 18 of the Act.
- Granted in part – information requested is provided but with some information either out of scope of the request or refused or withheld under grounds specified in section 6, 9 or 18 of the Act.
- Refused in full – information is not provided under any ground in section 6, 9 or 18 of the Act.

The Ministry began centrally recording the outcomes of our OIA requests from February 2021. As such, in the spirit of being helpful, the Ministry has provided you with the outcomes of requests responded to between February 2021 to June 2021- or the end of the financial year 2020/2021.

Time period	Outcome		
	Granted in full	Granted in part	Refused in full
Feb 2021 – June 2021	146	171	139

Please note that media requests do not currently record outcomes. As such, the Ministry has provided you with the outcomes of responses to OIA requests from February 2021 to June 2021. This count is only for OIA requests received by the Ministry or Chief Executive and does not include Ministerial OIA requests.

For the outcomes of responses for the financial year 2019/2020 and the beginning of the financial year 2020/21 (July 2020 to Jan 2021), the Ministry would need to manually review thousands of individual OIA files to assess the outcome of each request.

Additionally, the Ministry does not record the reason for refusal of a request – for example, recording how many requests were refused under a particular section of the Act. This would also require a manual review of thousands of individual files to assess the reason for refusing each request.

As such, I refuse these parts of your request under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Magnus O'Neill', written in a cursive style.

Magnus O'Neill
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services