

22 March 2022

C148233

S 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe S 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your request of 22 February 2022 to the Department of Corrections – Ara Poutama Aotearoa (Corrections), requesting the information about Official Information Act requests. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

We take our legislative obligations under the OIA seriously. We continuously work to enhance our capabilities to uphold the principles of the OIA and promote open and transparent government. We are committed to a culture of continuous improvement and acknowledge there is always more we can do to enhance official information practice.

Corrections received approximately 12,500 pieces of correspondence in the 2020/21 financial year. Of these roughly 7,500 were requests made under the OIA, which is an increase of 110% in OIAs responded to since the 2016/17 financial year. OIAs received directly at prisons or Community Corrections are managed onsite and we are currently unable to capture this data. Therefore, your request for the number of OIA requests received by the Department of Corrections is declined under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act 1982 as the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research. The figures provided in this response represent OIA requests received by Corrections' Ministerial Services and Media teams at National Office as this is the only data currently centralised.

For ease of response, some of your questions have been re-ordered. You requested:

I would like to request the number of Official Information Act requests received by The Department of Corrections in the past five years.

The number of OIA requests that are managed by Corrections' Ministerial Services and Media teams at National Office from 2016/17 to 2020/21 is publicly available on our website. The figures on our website represent the number of requests that have been received and responded to by financial year.

The table below provides the number of OIAs that have been submitted and responded to, by Corrections' Ministerial Services and Media teams at National Office for the past five financial years, as published on our website:

| Financial Year | 2020/2021 | 2019/2020 | 2018/19 | 2017/2018 | 2016/2017 |
|---|-----------|-----------|---------|-----------|-----------|
| Official Information Act requests received and responded to | 7,491 | 6,392 | 5,057 | 4,054 | 3,568 |

I would also like to know how many of these requests were approved - I don't need the reasons they were rejected.

The number of OIA requests that are released in full is also publicly available on our website [here](#). In 2020/21 information was released in full in 94.2% of requests, up from 88% of requests in 2018/19. We also report a number of other statistics on our website such as OIAs where a partially release was appropriate or where a request was transferred to other agencies in full.

Similar data has also been publicly released through other avenues, including past Corrections Annual Reports and statistics published by the Public Service Commission. There may be minor discrepancies with the data presented between different sources. This is due to the data being extracted at different times, and Corrections' ongoing quality assurance process to ensure the data is as accurate as possible.

Can this please be broken down into the numbers of requests made by members of the media and by members of the public.

The table below provides the number of OIA responses Corrections' centralised National Office team sent to members of the public and media/journalists from 2017/18 to 2020/21. The categorisation of requestor is done administratively. Accordingly, the information may not be accurate, however, it is provided to the best of our ability.

| Financial Year | Sent OIAs and Media OIAs | |
|----------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| | Member of public | Media/Journalist |
| 2017/18 | 3,584 | 148 |
| 2018/19 | 4,037 | 807 |
| 2019/20 | 5,248 | 830 |
| 2020/21 | 5,718 | 692 |
| Total | 18,587 | 2,477 |

The requester category was not recorded for Corrections OIAs prior to the 2017/18 financial year. With improved data capturing and analysis, this data may differ slightly to figures previously reported elsewhere.

Can I also please be given the number of employees who are employed to respond solely to Official Information Act requests and their combined salaries - I don't need their individual salaries.

I can advise that no Corrections' staff are employed solely to respond to OIA requests.

Corrections operates a centralised Ministerial Services team which is responsible for managing a range of departmental correspondence such as OIA requests, Privacy Act requests, and other correspondence received into National Office directly. In 2020/21 the team managed almost 12,500 requests. The Ministerial Services team is also responsible for supporting the Minister of Corrections by processing, preparing, and writing responses to ministerial correspondence including Parliamentary Questions. Corrections also operates a centralised Media team responsible for responding to requests from journalists and media outlets. These requests include those made under the OIA where the information is readily available and can be assured in the timeframe required. Those requests from the media that require more detailed collation or assurance are often provided to the Ministerial Services Team to progress. As noted above, OIAs are also completed by staff in other areas of Corrections such as prisons and Community Corrections who complete OIA responses in addition to their standard duties.

As part of the Annual Review process, Corrections does report on the number of Ministerial Services and Communications employed. The following table provides the number of Ministerial Services and Communications staff as at 30 June 2021, and for each of the previous four years at the end of each financial year. Please note that the Communications staff include six staff in our media team who work to a 24/7 roster, a communications person for the statutorily independent New Zealand Parole Board and the independent Corrections Inspectorate, a small team who manage internal communications for our 10,000 staff and support strategic and project communications and event planning as well as four regional communications staff.

| Financial Year As at 30 June | Ministerial Staff | Communications Staff | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| | FTE Staff | Contractors/ Consultants | Permanent staff | Fixed term staff |
| 2021 | 17 | 2 | 17 | 5 |
| 2020 | 14 | - | 17 | 4 |
| 2019 | 14 | - | 18 | 2 |
| 2018 | 15 | - | 16 | 3 |
| 2017 | 16 | - | 18 | 1 |

However, the budgeted and actual costs of Ministerial Services is provided on page 102 of Correction's Annual Report 2020/21, which is publicly available via the below:

[www.corrections.govt.nz/ data/assets/pdf file/0010/44398/Annual Report 2020 2021 Final Web.pdf](http://www.corrections.govt.nz/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/44398/Annual_Report_2020_2021_Final_Web.pdf)

Please note that this response may be published on Corrections' website. Typically, responses are published quarterly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

I encourage you to raise any concerns about this response with Corrections. Alternatively, you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Contact details are: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

I trust the information provided is of assistance.

Ngā mihi



Richard Waggott
Deputy Chief Executive
People and Capability