

18 September 2020

Darren Sharpe

By email: fyi-request-13574-f1f5792e@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Sharpe

Official Information Act Request: Request for information relating to wastewater testing

On 22 August 2020, you sent a request for information under the Official Information Act 1982 to ESR as follows:

Can you please confirm whether there has been any testing of the waste water in NZ to establish the presence or other of the coronavirus leading to COVID 19, or any other associated diseases.

If affirmative please provide a summary or table of results which includes, the locations and results of such tests (positive or negative for the presence of coronavirus), the time and date of the first test per location, and most recent results, (positive or negative for coronavirus)

Our response to your request

ESR confirms that limited testing of wastewater has been carried out in New Zealand as part of an ongoing research programme to establish methodology for the detection of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

ESR is not in a position to provide test results as you have requested. There are no published test results. Data is collected as part of the wastewater research project but these are not in a sharable format as they are preliminary only and need to be contextualised in order to be understood as part of the research project.

Once regular surveillance via wastewater is established we will be communicating this information publicly as results are generated.

If there is a specific question related to samples analysed so far that you would like to ask we would be happy to address that.

You have the right to seek a review

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Thank you for your request.

Yours sincerely



Jill Vintiner
Chief Operations Manager – Health and Environment Group
ESR