

8 December 2020

Dianne Landy

[fyi-request-14093-325954ab@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-14093-325954ab@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Dianne,

### OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST 2020/50

Thank you for your request of [7 November 2020] under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) regarding documents relating to the cannabis referendum. Specifically, you have asked for:

- 1) *The number of votes in the Cannabis Referendum that have been rendered invalid due to clerical errors*
- 2) *How many voters have received letters informing them that their vote in the Cannabis Referendum was null and void, due to clerical errors?*

Responses to your questions are set out below.

For the referendums, in accordance with section 23 of the Referendum Frameworks Act 2019, votes were counted as:

- valid votes cast for each of the options for each question in the referendum; and
- informal votes for each of the options for each question in the referendum

At the 2020 general election, a total of 2,908,071 referendum votes were counted. The national level breakdown of the results are as follows:

	End of Life Choice			Cannabis			Total Votes
	Yes	No	Informal	Yes	No	Informal	
Ordinary Votes Referendum Totals	1,574,789	816,476	25,092	1,114,579	1,282,529	19,249	2,416,357
Special Votes Referendums Totals	318,501	162,603	10,610	292,394	192,106	7,214	491,714

Included in these counts were informal votes. Votes will be set aside when a voter does not clearly indicate their intention for which the voter desired to vote. This may include voters who have not marked their voting paper, or marked their voting paper in such a way their intention is unclear.

Of the referendum ordinary votes cast, all were counted, and none were disallowed.

Of all referendum special votes cast, 12,790 were disallowed and these votes were not counted for the official results. The reasons for special votes being disallowed and the numbers disallowed for each reason for each electorate are given on [electionresults.govt.nz](https://electionresults.govt.nz) here: [https://electionresults.govt.nz/electionresults\\_2020/statistics/sdv-disallowed.html](https://electionresults.govt.nz/electionresults_2020/statistics/sdv-disallowed.html).

The Electoral Commission does not have a record of the number of invalid cannabis referendum votes due to clerical errors.

It is not the Electoral Commission's operating procedure to write to any voters to inform them their vote in the cannabis referendum was not counted due to a clerical error.

I trust this information answers your request.

You have the right under section 28(3) of the Act to make a complaint to the Ombudsman if you are not satisfied with the response to your requests.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Astle', written in a cursive style.

Graeme Astle  
National Manager Voting Services