

6 April 2023

M Bell

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Tēnā koe M Bell

**Official Information Act (OIA) request: identifiable census information**

On 9 March, you contacted Stats NZ requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

*During the years from 2000 to 2022 please provide the following :*

- *the total number of requests made from any individual, agency, contractor, corporation, or govt department to Statistics New Zealand to supply identifiable census information.*
- *the total number of times identifiable census information was provided.*
- *the total number of times any identifiable census information has been leaked (accidentally or deliberately).*
- *the total number of times identifiable census information has been hacked or stolen.*

Stats NZ's data sharing policies across the period in question have complied with relevant legislation, including the Data and Statistics Act 2022, the Statistics Act 1975, the Privacy Act 2020 and the Privacy Act 1993. Accordingly, Stats NZ does not release identifiable census information to any agency, contractor, corporation, or government department, or to any individual besides the person to whom the information relates (or someone whom they have approved to receive this information).

Stats NZ does not hold a record of any requests received for identifiable census information from agencies, contractors, corporations, or government departments. For the reasons noted above, these would necessarily be declined if they were received. Accordingly, we are refusing this aspect of your request under request 18(e) of the Official Information Act as this information does not exist.

Stats NZ has searched its available records, dating back to 2012, for requests we have received and responded to from individuals seeking their own census-related personal information under the Privacy Act. Where census responses were found for these individuals, we provided a copy of this to them under Principle 6 of the Privacy Act. In total, we have identified nine such requests from individuals between 2012 and 2022. Additional time would be required to search our records prior to 2012 for details of such requests. If you require this information, please let us know and we can initiate a further search.

As far as Stats NZ is aware, no identifiable census information been leaked (accidentally or deliberately), hacked or stolen over the period 2000-2022.

We are confident no such incidents have occurred under the integrated data infrastructure (IDI) since its establishment in 2013. The IDI is a research database available only to vetted and approved researchers. It holds de-identified microdata about people and households, which includes census information. Only procedural breaches have occurred in the IDI, and none of these have resulted in any identifiable information being released. We can also confirm that no such incidents are recorded in our current corporate privacy database, which dates back to 2019.

You may be interested in referring to the following OIA responses Stats NZ has previously provided relating to privacy and personal information:

OIA0020: [Access to personal information in the IDI - Responses to Official Information Act requests - Stats NZ Store House \(oclc.org\)](#)

OIA0392: [Privacy request for address - Responses to Official Information Act requests - Stats NZ Store House \(oclc.org\)](#)

OIA0402: [Privacy request - Responses to Official Information Act requests - Stats NZ Store House \(oclc.org\)](#)

OIA0674: [Census Warrants and Court Orders: Census Warrants & Court Orders - Responses to Official Information Act requests - Stats NZ Store House \(oclc.org\)](#)

An extensive search of all Stats NZ's records across the full twenty-year period would span multiple systems and involve substantial manual searching and collation. Currently the information you have requested (total figures over a long period) does not exist. Creating this information may not be entirely feasible (depending on how events or issues may have been described) and would require additional time to provide. If you do wish to request further information, please let us know and we will assess what information we can feasibly provide, if any, and how long this may take.

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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

It is Stats NZ's policy to proactively release its responses to official information requests where possible. This letter, with your personal details removed, will be published on the Stats NZ website. Publishing responses creates greater openness and transparency of government decision-making and helps better inform public understanding of the reasons for decisions.

Ngā mihi nui, nā



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