

Our Ref: 415692
Contact: Rachael Jordan

29 October 2015

Sonia Singh

By email: fyi-request-3270-ca8374ac@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Singh

I refer to your correspondence of 15 October 2015, in which you request health information in relation to dementia statistics in New Zealand.

In the first instance, it may help if I provide a brief explanation regarding the role of the Ombudsman. Where an agency is listed in the Ombudsmen Act 1975, an Ombudsman may investigate the actions and decisions of that agency to the extent that they relate to a matter of administration and affect any person in a personal capacity.

An Ombudsman has the authority to consider complaints about responses to requests for official information made under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). Official information can be requested from the central and local government agencies listed in the Ombudsmen Act 1975, and the OIA.

The normal process under the OIA is that the requester makes a request to the agency that holds the relevant information. Under section 15 of the OIA, the agency is then required to communicate a decision on the request:

“as soon as reasonably practicable, and in any case no later than 20 working days after the day on which the request is received by that department”.

It does not appear that you have put your request for information to the agency. If you wish to pursue the matter, I suggest you put your request in writing to the Ministry of Health. This gives the Ministry the opportunity to respond to a request in the first instance. You can set out your request in writing to:

Ministry of Health
PO Box 5013
Wellington 6145
Email: info@health.govt.nz

If you are unhappy with the Ministry's response to your request, you can complain to an Ombudsman. Under the OIA, an Ombudsman can investigate:

- decisions to withhold information or to delete information from documents released to you;
- delays or extensions to the time limits for responding to requests;
- charges for supplying information;
- the way in which information has been made available; and
- the response to a request for a statement of reasons for a decision affecting the requester.

An Ombudsman is not able to commence an investigation under the Official Information Act 1982 if the information was not requested, or could not reasonably have been understood to be covered by a request, then an Ombudsman has no jurisdiction to investigate.

If you wish to make a complaint about a request for official information, you will need to provide this Office with a copy of your request and any response received.

You may also wish to contact Alzheimer's New Zealand, which may be able to assist in your enquiry. You can contact Alzheimer's NZ at:

<http://www.alzheimers.org.nz/contact-us.aspx>

I hope you have found my comments helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anthony Illott', with the date '11/02/18' written to the right of the signature.

Anthony Illott
Manager – Early Assistance Team