

13 January 2016

Mr Kyle Sutherland  
fyi-request-5003-281813da@requests.fyi.org.nz

Reference H201604793

Dear Mr Sutherland

**Official Information Act Request: Estimated Annual Costs of Harm from Legal and Illegal Drugs**

Thank you for your request of 22 November 2016, subsequently transferred from New Zealand Police on 28 November 2016 under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

You have asked for the latest yearly overall dollar cost of harm statistics from drug use for the following legal and illegal drugs:

1. Alcohol
2. Tobacco
3. Cannabis
4. Synthetic Cannabis
5. LSD
6. Ecstasy
7. MDMA
8. Heroin
9. Methamphetamine
10. Cocaine
11. Mushrooms.

The Ministry of Health does not hold this information but the following information may be of use to you.

With regard to alcohol you may want to consult the following website:

<http://www.alcohol.org.nz/research-resources/nz-statistics>.

There is no annual update of the health and/or social costs of tobacco use. However, reports addressing the issue have appeared from time to time. For example, the *Report on Tobacco Taxation in New Zealand Volume* Wellington, 2007 by Des O'Dea is available at:

<http://www.sfc.org.nz/pdfs/TobTaxVolOneNovember.pdf>.

I understand from a previous request that you are familiar with the New Zealand Illegal Drug Harm Index 2016 (<http://www.health.govt.nz/publication/research-report-new-zealand-drug-harm-index-2016>). This report attempts to collate information from a variety of sources to estimate the harm from a variety of illegal drugs.

In this report drugs of interest covered four main groups as well as specific drug types. The rationale for this is that estimates at the group level are more robust than those at the type level, primarily because they involve larger data sets. Of course, combining different drug types into a

In this report drugs of interest covered four main groups as well as specific drug types. The rationale for this is that estimates at the group level are more robust than those at the type level, primarily because they involve larger data sets. Of course, combining different drug types into a single drug group involves loss of detail, so we are unable to provide you with estimates for the specific drugs you have listed.

As the Ministry of Health does not hold the information you are seeking this request is declined under section 18(g) of the Act.

You have the right, under section 28 of the Act, to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision to withhold information under this request.

Yours sincerely



Jill Lane  
**Director**  
**Services Commissioning**

P.P