



20 FEB 2017

Mr G Connolly
fyi-request-5238-afe0b570@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Connolly

On 20 January 2017 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *Data Format requested: electronic, comma delimited plain text file.*
- *Data for the period 01 January 2007 to 31 December 2016 preferred but whatever period is available.*
- *Variables requested for each individual (without the benefit of a data dictionary the following variables if possible)*
 - *Anonymous unique-identifier*
 - *Gender*
 - *Date of birth*
 - *Ethnic group*
 - *Citizenship-eligibility status: NZ born, immigrant, refugee*
 - *Highest New Zealand educational qualification*
- *The following variables could potentially occur many times per individual and can be provided as either multiple variables or as multiple rows (but preferably not a mixture of both).*
 - *Enrolment location: preferably categorised by Dept. Statistics Territorial Authority Areas.*
 - *Enrolment date*
 - *Usual occupation (or prior occupation if usual not available): job title*
 - *Assets*
 - *Relationship status: married, single, de facto*
 - *Number of dependants cared for*
 - *Occupation/employment sought: job title*
 - *Occupation/employment type: full-time, part-time, casual*
 - *Support start date*
 - *Fixed regular payment amount to be paid*
 - *Fixed regular payment start date*
 - *Fixed regular payment period: weekly, fortnightly, monthly*
 - *Support end date*
 - *Support end reason*

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- *Variable value categories noted above are only examples. As I do not have the benefit of a data dictionary detailing available variables and values I anticipate some of the non-numeric variables requested above will have free-text string values.*

Subsequently Ministry analysts contacted you and discussed your request and the data in which you were interested; It was concluded that what you required was unit level data. As discussed this is not something the Ministry is able to provide as clients would be identifiable if data is broken down to this level.

As such, your request for this information is refused under section 9(2)(a) of the Act in order to protect the privacy of natural persons. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information.

Your request is also refused under section 18(f) of the Act as in order to address your questions, the Ministry would need to divert personnel from their core duties and allocate extra time to complete this task. The diversion of these resources would impair the Ministry's ability to continue standard operations and would be an inefficient use of the Ministry's resources.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your requests given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. As the information, even if collated, would then be withheld to protect clients' privacy, I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced and the greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

As also discussed with you the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) is a large research database containing microdata about people and households from a range of government agencies. Researchers can apply for access to IDI data available through the Data Lab. To gain access, applicants must successfully prove their project is for bona fide research purposes that are in the public interest. Further information about the application process is available on the Statistics New Zealand website here: www.stats.govt.nz/tools_and_services/microdata-access/data-lab.aspx

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

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 or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



 Elisabeth Brunt
General Manager, Ministerial and Executive Services