

Abortion Supervisory Committee

13 March 2017

Sarah Habershon

By email: fyi-request-5386-b4893ce3@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Habershon

OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

I refer to your email of 15 February 2017 to the Abortion Supervisory Committee (ASC) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA):

- A breakdown of abortions both performed and denied in New Zealand for the last five years, broken down by DHB, woman's age bracket, woman's ethnicity, and the number of previous abortions and live births of the women who had abortions.

Abortions Performed in New Zealand

Information on abortions performed in New Zealand for the last five years, broken down by hospital, residence of woman, age bracket, ethnicity, number of previous abortions and of live births, is available in the ASC's Annual Reports. This information is therefore refused under section 18(d) of the OIA as it is publically available at the following link: <https://www.justice.govt.nz/tribunals/abortion-supervisory-committee/annual-reports/>

Statistical data for the 2016 year is has not yet been released by Statistics NZ and is therefore not available. This part of your request is refused under section 18(g)(i) of the OIA as the information is not held by the ASC and have no grounds for believing the information is held by another department.

Abortions Declined in New Zealand

Under section 30 of the Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion Act 1977 (CSA Act), the ASC is required to set up and maintain a list of medical practitioners (certifying consultants) who may be called upon to consider cases referred to them by any medical practitioner and determine whether to authorise an abortion (justified or not justified).

In order for an abortion to be considered lawful, two certifying consultants must be satisfied that a woman seeking an abortion meets the grounds set out in section 187A of the Crimes Act 1961. When a certifying consultant does not believe an abortion is

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justified, the case is then referred to a third certifying consultant who can consider the case.

The information recorded in table 1, below, shows the number of times a certifying consultant has deemed an abortion not justified in the previous six years including 2016. It does not, however, show the number of times a woman has been denied an abortion because a third consultant may subsequently agree that the abortion is justified. Specific information on the number of abortions that have been deemed not justified by multiple certifying consultants and therefore considered "denied" would require a substantial amount of research and collation to obtain. Your request for this information is refused under section 18(f) of the OIA.

Table 1

Number of Not Justified Abortion Certificates
2011-2016

Year	Not Justified
2011	181
2012	198
2013	283
2014	216
2015	264
2016	252

This information is released to you under the OIA. If you are not satisfied with our response to your request, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman under section 28(3). The Ombudsman may be contacted by writing to the Office of Ombudsman at PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143, by email to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phone to 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Rachael Cole
Secretary
Abortion Supervisory Committee