

13 November 2013

D & L
fyi-request-1169-7956b6bd@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear D & L

Thank you for your email of 11 October 2013 to the New Zealand Police, requesting under the Official Information Act 1982, "how many cases have been referred to a coroner in the past 5 years and the time taken for these cases to have results." You also ask when the inquest relating to the death of Mr Matthew Hall will be finalised.

The Police transferred your request to the Ministry of Justice on 15 October, because the Ministry is in a better position to respond to your request.

The number of cases referred to the coroner during the past five financial years and the average time to complete a case, are included in the table below.

Financial Year	Number of cases referred to a coroner	Average number of days to complete a case
2008/2009	3,341	165
2009/2010	3,406	219
2010/2011	3,392	255
2011/2012	3,351	267
2012/2013	3,098	361

Some coronial cases take longer to investigate than others, e.g. approximately 56% of cases in 2012/13 were deaths caused by natural causes and were closed in an average of 137 days. Cases where a formal inquest or hearing on the papers was required took longer, namely 628 days and 518 days respectively. Should a coroner be waiting for another investigation, e.g. in a criminal court, this may also increase the time taken to close the case.

I understand the coronial inquiry concerning Mr Hall's death is still ongoing. As this is a matter that is currently in a judicial process, as a government official it is not appropriate for me to comment, or advise a timeframe when it might be completed.

If you have concerns about the length of time the coronial inquiry is taking, you can write to the Coroner concerned and/or the Chief Coroner, Judge Neil MacLean, at officeofthechiefcoroner@justice.govt.nz, or:

Chief Coroner
Auckland District Court, Level 7
5-69 Albert Street
CX10079
Auckland

You have the right by way of complaint to an Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act 1982, to seek an investigation and review of this response.

Yours sincerely



Heather Baggott
General Manager, Special Jurisdictions