

17/12/2020

Gregory Soar

By email: fyi-request-14174-5c9a24be@requests.fyi.org.nz
Ref: H202008358

Dear Gregory Soar

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) received on 20 November 2020 for information relating to COVID-19 cases.

You specifically requested:

"How many businesses in total have been visited by Covid-19 positive cases but not disclosed publically?"

While the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) has considered your request, it has been determined that providing a response would require substantial collation.

Providing a full and correct response would involve cross-referencing each individual's case details and compiling information from multiple databases for more than the 1,000 cases we have had in New Zealand. This is considered 'substantial' as it would have a significant and unreasonable impact on the National Investigation and Tracing Centre and the affected Public Health Units (PHUs) ability to carry out their critical operations. Therefore, this request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act.

The Ministry has prioritised transparency as part of the response to COVID-19. As such, information relevant to the public interest regarding those who have tested positive has been shared wherever possible, including in the daily media briefings.

Further information on the COVID-19: Contact tracing locations of interest can also be found at the following link: www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-health-advice-public/contact-tracing-covid-19/covid-19-contact-tracing-locations-interest.

There are particular instances in which a decision is made to not share this information with the public.

1. The Ministry and the public health unit managing the case deem the locations to be low risk (for example, the case spent a minimal amount of time at the business, or there were no other people at the business at the time that the case was there).
2. There are confidentiality concerns around the business or the person who tested positive (for example, sharing the name of the business may cause a confidentiality breach).

3. The public health unit has identified and contacted all those who may have been in contact with the person who tested positive as a result of their visit to the business, and therefore there would be no further benefit to disclosing the business name.
4. It is determined that the person who tested positive visited the business before they became infectious.

If you wish to make a further request for information, the Official Information Act team would be happy to assist you in making a new, refined request for information. Their contact details are: oiagr@health.govt.nz.

Under section 28(3) of the Act you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Astrid Koornneef', with a horizontal line underneath.

Astrid Koornneef
Group Manager COVID-19 Contact Tracing
COVID-19 Health System Response