



WELLINGTON

27 November 2014

Reference No: OIA 14-165

A Wright-St Clair

By email: fyi-request-2145-d506194e@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear A Wright-St Clair

Official Information Act request – Composition statistics of imports processed by Customs

Thank you for your email to the New Zealand Customs Service (Customs) dated 30 October 2014 in which you requested the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) for the period of 2004-2014:

1. The total number of parcels processed by Customs via international mail and express air freight
2. The total number of parcels processed by Customs that had a value under NZ\$400.00
3. The total number of parcels processed by Customs that did not attract GST charges

De Minimis and \$400

Customs does not collect duty and GST where the total amount payable on a single import is less than the *de minimis* (currently \$60). For goods which do not attract duty, this equates to a value of \$400 including freight and insurance. For dutiable goods such as clothes, the value at which duty and GST is collected is lower. There is no *de minimis* on alcohol and tobacco products.

It is important to note that low value consignments still *attract* GST, but it is not *collected* if the total owing is less than \$60.

As you have requested information about both international mail packages and express air freight, and these are dealt with differently by Customs, I will address each of these types of freight in turn.

Mail packages

All international mail packages are processed at the International Mail Centre (IMC) in Auckland, where they pass through a Customs and Biosecurity screening process before being sorted for delivery. Customs can provide the following totals for imported mail items for the last five years:

Total mail items processed by Customs 2010 – 31 October 2014

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014 (up to 31 October)
Packages Imported	35,194,906	36,531,745	34,743,081	32,724,461	24,699,477

Customs does not hold the relevant data relating to the years 2004 to 2009. As such, this part of your request is refused under section 18(g) of the OIA.

As the vast majority of mail items are not recorded in the Customs system in any manner, accurate statistics on the total number of mail packages with a declared value of less than NZ\$400.00, or the total number of mail packages on which GST is not collected, cannot be provided. Consequently, this part of your request is also refused under section 18(g) of the OIA.

Express Air Freight packages

Customs does not specifically record data on express air freight (courier) packages but is able to provide data on air freight packages that are accounted for by Electronic Cargo Information (ECI). The ECI system is used to account for packages arriving in consolidated freight shipments - the majority of which are courier packages. The following table gives figures for this type of shipment each year since 2004:

Total air freight ECI items processed by Customs 2004 – 31 October 2014

Year	Number of packages	Number of packages with declared value less than \$400
2004	2,081,231	1,814,850
2005	2,496,250	1,942,174
2006	2,355,142	1,801,166
2007	2,481,022	1,917,833
2008	2,590,396	2,183,507
2009	2,454,612	2,051,746
2010	2,564,672	2,065,370
2011	3,000,335	2,451,822
2012	3,866,255	3,578,681
2013	4,948,631	4,816,024
2014 YTD	4,964,427	4,858,336

The number of ECI packages which were cleared with no GST being paid is not held by Customs. This part of your request is consequently refused under section 18(g) of the OIA.

You have the right, by way of complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the OIA, to seek an investigation and review of the decision conveyed in this letter. However, in the first instance, please contact External Relations Manager Helen Keyes at Helen.Keyes@customs.govt.nz if you would like to discuss any aspect of this letter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Katie Mathison', followed by a horizontal line.

Katie Mathison
Group Manager Communications