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45 Pipitea Street, Wellington 6011

Phone +64 4 495 7200

K Thompson

[fyi-request-25226-](mailto:fyi-request-25226-62478ec4@requests.fyi.org.nz)

62478ec4@requests.fyi.org.nz

dia.govt.nz

Tēnā koe

OIA request 23/24 0504 Request for Information on Death registrations

Thank you for your Official Information Act (Act) request received by Statistics New Zealand on 18 December 2023.

Four parts of your request were transferred to the Department of Internal Affairs (Department) on 17 January 2024, pursuant to section 14 of the Act; that a request or part of a request can be transferred where the information is believed to be more closely connected with the functions of another department.

You requested –

- 1. Please can you tell me for the last five years in New Zealand have all deaths been registered at the time of death and are deaths currently being registered at time of death, or has there been or is there a delay in registering deaths, for instance due to coronial investigations?*
- 2. Please let me know how many delays in registration of death there have been per death in New Zealand per month for the last five years.*
- 3. How long is the delay after death before the deaths are registered?*
- 4. Please let me know the reasons for delay in registration of deaths, if that has been occurring.*

On 25 January 2024, we contacted you via email to ask for you to clarify and define what was meant by 'delay' in deaths being registered at question one. We sought clarification as to whether you meant that 'delay' was:

(a) caused by the coroner or

(b) from the funeral director after the three days in which they must notify the Department by of the death.

No response was received.

You can find the BDMRRA at the following website; <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/>.

In response to your request, I can provide you with the following information.

Questions one and four

I can advise there is no timeframe for when a coroner must have completed an inquiry under the Coroners Act 2006, therefore, the period of time pending the completion of the coroners' findings is not classified as a delay.

If a death is referred to the coroner, they will generally authorise the body to be released for burial or cremation. This means the death can be notified and registered. An interim cause of death will state 'Subject To Coroners' Findings' on the death certificate.

After the final findings of the coroner have been released, the death registration will be updated, and a new death certificate can be issued to the next of kin. This will happen after the initial death certificate is returned to the Department.

Please refer to the Coronial Services of NZ website for more information on "What to expect during an inquiry" at <https://www.coronialservices.justice.govt.nz/what-to-expect-during-an-inquiry/>.

Births, Deaths and Marriages (BDM) require notification of a death by the person responsible for the burial or cremation of the body, no later than three working days after the burial or cremation. In most cases this is done by a funeral director.

If BDM requires further information or clarification from the funeral director or person registering the death, this will cause a delay in the death registration being completed and it will be on hold until that information is provided. Delays in registration can be caused by missing information eg, ages of the children, relationship status of the individual etc.

Questions two and three

Please see Appendix A attached to this letter that shows death registration data for the past five years by month/year of registration and the days between death and completed registration.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, the Department has decided to proactively release a copy of this response on the DIA website. All requestor data, including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release. The released response will be made available here: <https://www.dia.govt.nz/Official-Information-Act-Requests-2>.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi



Julia Taylor
Manager Operational Policy and Official Correspondence
Service Delivery and Operations