

18 November 2016

Mr Robert McKenzie
fyi-request-4835-560a1c16@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr McKenzie

Thank you for your request made under the Official Information Act (OIA) 1982, received on 24 October 2016. You have requested the following information:

Can you please provide me how many suicides have been attributed to IRD's questionable Student Loan collection practices?

Can I also have information on how many times and how often your collection officers receive threats of suicide?

I also require information on how many student loans are being paid back through the proceeds of prostitution.

I have answered your questions in turn.

Questions One and Three

I am unable to provide the information you have requested under section 18(g)(i) of the OIA because the information you have requested is not held by the department or Minister of the Crown or organisation and there are no grounds for believing that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation, or by a local authority.

Question Two

Since December 2011 Collections Officers have reported 266 threats of self-harm from customers in debt, this covers all types of debt not just student loans. To put this figure into context, the total number of customer service contacts received by Inland Revenue for the 2016 year was 5.55 million.

Right of review

If you disagree with my decision you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision. The office of the Ombudsman can be contacted at PO Box 10152, The Terrace, Wellington, 6143 or online at ombudsman.parliament.nz

Alternatively, you may have the decision reviewed by a review officer. Choosing the internal right of review does not preclude you from subsequently seeking a review by the Ombudsman should you be dissatisfied with the department's internal review. If an internal review is sought, please write to the Commissioner of Inland Revenue, PO Box 2198, Wellington 6140, setting out the details of your complaint.

Thank you again for writing. I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a vertical line with several loops on the left side, followed by a horizontal line that tapers to the right.

Maurice Lawlor
Business Owner, Student Loans