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Dear Donald Gordon

Official Information Act 1982 request 1617-0272

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (Act) request, which was received by the Department of Internal Affairs (Department) on 23 March 2017:

You requested:

The count, for each year from 2001 to 2016 inclusive, of

- 1) Marriages carried out by an organisational celebrant*
- 2) Marriages carried out by an independent celebrant*
- 3) Marriages carried out by a Registrar of Marriages*
- 4) All other Marriages*
- 5) Civil Unions carried out by an organisational celebrant*
- 6) Civil Unions carried out by an independent celebrant*
- 7) Civil Unions carried out by a Registrar of Marriages*
- 8) All other Civil Unions*

Released Information

A number of people are able to conduct marriage ceremonies as set out in the Marriage Act 1955. These are Independent celebrants, Organisational celebrants, Ministers of religious bodies and Registrars. Ceremonies can also be conducted by persons approved to act as Registrars at Department of Internal Affairs Registry Offices, and Courts which fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice.

The information provided below is from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2016 inclusive:

Marriages

Officiator	Year of Marriage		
	2014	2015	2016
Independent	11,452	11,896	12,318
Organisational Celebrant	6,557	5,668	5,567
Registrar*	5,008	5,047	5,371
Total	23,017	22,611	23,256

Civil Unions

Officiator	Year of Civil Union		
	2014	2015	2016
Independent	16	12	16
Registrar*	45	56	50
Total	61	68	66

Information not released

Dates

The date range you have requested information for is from 2001 to 2016. The Department did not record data electronically for dates prior to 2014. To provide statistics for marriages and civil unions for the period 2001 – 2014 would involve manually checking the details for all 450,000 registered marriages and civil unions in that year. The time and cost of collating this information would be substantial and -therefore, under Section 18(f) of the Act, this part of your request is refused as “the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research”.

Organisational Celebrants for Civil Unions

In the case of Civil Unions there is no provision in the Civil Union Act 2004 which allows for Organisational celebrants to conduct Civil Union ceremonies; therefore no information exists for this category. Under section 18(g) of the Act your request for information is refused for the reason ‘that the information requested is not held by the department or Minister of the Crown or organisation and the person dealing with the request has no grounds for believing that the information is either—

- (i) Held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation, or by a local authority
- (ii) connected more closely with the functions of another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation or of a local authority’

Other Marriages/Civil Unions

Other than Marriages or Civil Unions carried out by approved persons (i.e. Independent celebrants, Organisational celebrants, Ministers of religious bodies or Registrars), there are no other types of Marriages or Civil Unions. Consequently, under section 18(g) of the Act your request for information is refused for the reason ‘that the information requested is not held by the department or Minister of

organisation and the person dealing with the request has no grounds for believing that the information is either—

- (i) Held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation, or by a local authority
- (ii) connected more closely with the functions of another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation or of a local authority'

On the Statistics New Zealand website you will find further information on marriages and civil unions. This information can be accessed [here](#) and is under Population/Marriages Civil Unions and Divorces.

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.

If you would like to discuss your request further, please email OIA@dia.govt.nz with your contact details, and we can arrange a time for us to call you.

Yours sincerely



Briget Ridden
Manager Business Improvement and Support
Births Deaths Marriages Citizenship and Translations