

31 July 2017



Gael Wright

Email: [fyi-request-6100-b9693965@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-6100-b9693965@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Gael

### **Official Information Act (OIA) Request**

The Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC) received your email request on 3 July 2017 for the following information:

*All minutes of all Grant Assessment Committee meetings for the last 5 years. There should be no redaction of identities as these are minutes of meetings of an official public body.*

*All scores of all grant applications for the last 5 years. This should include scores at each stage of the assessment (including, panel scoring at each stage (by individual if possible) and reviewer scores) and final outcome. While it is appreciated that reviewer identities might want to be protected it would be preferable if all applicant information and committee member information is provided (for the purposes of statistical analysis). Certainly panel-list identities should be provided as they are acting as public servants.*

*In particular, we refer the Council to Section 6 of the Official Information Act '...information shall be made available unless there is good reason for withholding it' and we see no "good reason" for any of this information to be withheld from public scrutiny.*

Since then, we have had several communications with you on 17, 22, 24, 25 and 26 July 2017 (see attached).

As noted in our correspondences, we are not in a position to provide you with our complete data set in light of the legislation noted below and our need to:

- i) 9 (2) (a) protect the privacy of natural persons,

And

- ii) 9 (2) (ba) (i) protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence or which any person has been or could be compelled to provide under the authority of any enactment, where the making available of the information would be likely to prejudice the supply of similar information, or information from the same source, and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied.

And

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Telephone 64 9 303 5200 Facsimile 64 9 377 9988 Website: [www.hrc.govt.nz](http://www.hrc.govt.nz)

- iii) 9 (2) (g) (i) maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any department or organisation in the course of their duty.

We indicated in our letters that we would be pleased to meet with you to discuss the questions that you wish to answer and explore possibilities to refine your request. We also invited you to contact us by Friday 28 July to discuss the following options:

- a) Understanding your specific requirements, and refining the scope of your request (for example) a particular set of information for a particular researcher or research group, or data from a panel or year, and/or
- b) Reviewing the possible work involved within the scope of your refined request and therefore assisting the HRC to consider the charges it may need to assign in order to respond to your request, under sections 18(1)(a) and 15 of the Act.

However, as we have not received further correspondence from you to date, we therefore have to refuse your request under section 18(f) of the OIA. We have considered whether charging or extending the timeframe for responding to your request would help, as required by section 18A of the OIA. However, after careful consideration, we find that charging or extending would not help since your request as currently framed will have a great impact on the HRC's other operations.

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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or Freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to email the HRC at: [info@hrc.govt.nz](mailto:info@hrc.govt.nz).

Further to the above, you have raised the following question in your email dated 24 July 2017:

*Has the HRC performed internal (statistical) audits of the scores and allocations?  
Can they make those audits available?*

As noted in our reply on 26 July 2017, we interpreted this as a new request for information and will respond within 20 working days, on or before Monday 21 August 2017 in accordance with the Official Information Act. Meanwhile, we are still waiting for you to clarify the nature of the information you are requesting above. Can you please confirm whether you are seeking information relating to the internal audit of our processes or the range of statistical analyses of scores and allocations as indicated in our letter on 26 July 2017?

Yours sincerely



**Professor Kathryn McPherson**  
Chief Executive