

11 August 2017



Gael Wright

Email: fyi-request-6100-b9693965@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Gael

Official Information Act (OIA) Request

Thank you for email received 9 August 2017. The Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC) understands that you would like the following information:

Thank you for your reply and providing some background about the audits done. New Zealand is an unusually small funding environment with limited numbers of researchers. In particular, we would like to analyse whether there are any biases in the panel decision making processes. For example, do past and present panel member applications get treated more generously than other proposals. This is a critically important in ensuring the entire process is fair to all applicants.

HRC holds all the data to test this question in an unbiased manner. For example, we propose to look at the panel scores and compare them to reviewer scores and look for discrepancies between the two aggregate scores (if they exist). If they do exist then it could be determined analytically what the cause of this might be....

Since the dataset held by the HRC is large this can be definitively. We request the data such that we can perform this analysis. Having all the data (all panels) allows more test sensitivity. We do not require the identities of reviewers. We don't need the identities of the applicants or panel members either but that would require HRC to perform significant work to blind the application scores. We are happy to do this ourselves to reduce your workload. We note that we can treat the data provided in confidence.

HRC is considering your request and will undertake an initial scoping exercise. We will respond to you within 20 working days, that is by 6 September. Based on our scoping of your information request it is possible that we will need to request an extension, invite you to narrow the scope, or notify you as to the likely charges involved in making the requested information available (in accordance with section 18A of the Official Information Act (OIA)).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P.P. Patricia Powell', though the context identifies the signatory as Professor Kathryn McPherson.

Professor Kathryn McPherson
Chief Executive

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