



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

07 AUG 2017

Ms Cheryl Johnston  
[fyi-request-6180-f3e16f63@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-6180-f3e16f63@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Ms Johnston

On 10 July 2017, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *The total amount of money spent on defending CYF, WINZ, and any other organisation under the umbrella of MSD, in legal cases over the last 10 years. This includes lawyers fees for the Coroners court. It should also include all fees paid for advice, not just for the court appearances. This is for ALL cases.*

The Ministry has considered the scope of your request to broadly include all costs incurred by the Ministry for legal advice, support, including for court appearances, where the Ministry has been the defendant or respondent (as opposed to where the Ministry has initiated action) for the past ten year period. The Ministry has also taken it to include all in-house legal costs as well as external legal fees.

The Ministry does not centrally collate costs related to legal services to the level of detail you have requested. It would require substantial manual collation and assessment, by Ministry staff to review thousands of matters handled each year by legal services to determine whether the Ministry has been the defendant or respondent, and then to identify for each matter, the in-house legal costs and any associated individual invoices for external legal fees. As such your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider public shortly. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact [OIA\\_Requests@msd.govt.nz](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elisabeth Brunt', written in a cursive style.

Elisabeth Brunt  
**General Manager, Ministerial and Executive Services**