

12 APR 2018



**ORANGA
TAMARIKI**
Ministry for Children

Mr Zane Collins
fyi-request-7454-38967fd0@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Collins

Thank you for your email of 14 March 2018 to Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki), requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

- *The average associated cost of removing a child from his biological parents care and placing a child in fostercare per year per child?*
- *Also i would like to have the statistics of:*
 - *How many children were removed from their biological parents care per year from year 2000 to 2018 per year.*

On 16 March 2018, you clarified your request to the following:

- *How much is spent each year F2000 to F2018 on tamariki in care and how many tamariki that cost applies to?*

The table below shows the actual payments made on behalf of Tamariki in care since financial year 2000 to 2017. We have not provided information for the 2018 financial year as this year is still in progress and final figures do not yet exist.

The data is extracted from the client records payment system. The payments relates to the following types of expenses:

- Caregiver Board
- Family/whanau caregiver board
- Family Home board
- Community Bednights
- Care – other placement board
- Immediate material needs

There are other costs that relate to the expense of children in care such as social worker salaries which have not been included and are not easily quantifiable.

The total cost of children in care for each financial year and the total number of tamariki these costs apply to.

Financial Year	Cost \$ (000)	No. of Tamariki
FY2000	17,394	6,062
FY2001	20,358	6,361
FY2002	26,986	7,335
FY2003	45,785	8,334
FY2004	46,432	8,549
FY2005	80,163	8,955
FY2006	59,865	9,331
FY2007	61,402	9,167
FY2008	60,622	8,694
FY2009	59,954	8,035
FY2010	60,272	8,227
FY2011	59,351	7,860
FY2012	56,702	7,978
FY2013	60,168	7,933
FY2014	63,433	8,330
FY2015	74,108	8,099
FY2016	70,608	8,407
FY2017	77,128	8,979

It is important to be aware that averaging these numbers would not reflect the average cost of a child being placed into care and refers only to the number of tamariki in a financial year to whom payments were made. The tamariki in this table may have already been in care from a previous financial year, entered and exited care in different financial years or entered and exited care more than once in a financial year. These numbers are not the number of children in care.

Removing a child from their parents/caregivers is a significant and traumatic event, undertaken only when children cannot remain safe in the care of their parents/caregivers. A decision to remove a child will always involve the Family Court. If we believe the only way to keep a child safe is by placing them with an alternative caregiver we must satisfy the Family Court the harm or risk of harm requires this action and that we have explored all other options before arriving at this decision. The Family Court makes decisions based on the best information available and will not support our recommendations if it is not satisfied with the evidence or information we provide.

In the interest of transparency and the spirit of the Act we have decided to answer this additional question which was proposed as part of a refinement for your request:

- *The number of tamariki who entered care, each year, from financial year 2001/02 to financial year 2016/17.*

The following table shows the number of children who entered care and the number of distinct children who entered care. Please be aware these numbers do not include children who remain in care nor does it specify the number of children who left care in the same year.

The number of tamariki and the number of distinct tamariki who entered into care from 2001/02 to 2016/17 financial years

Fiscal Year ending the 30th June	Children	Distinct Children
2002	3,303	3,198
2003	2,897	2,812
2004	2,884	2,795
2005	2,883	2,804
2006	3,004	2,923
2007	2,708	2,628
2008	2,468	2,351
2009	2,640	2,509
2010	2,512	2,379
2011	2,073	1,955
2012	2,137	2,050
2013	2,160	2,053
2014	2,120	2,038
2015	1,754	1,709
2016	2,076	2,008
2017	1,998	1,955

This data includes boarding schools and therapeutic residential services. These numbers were generated on the 3rd of April 2018 and were based on operational data which is subject to change. If a child has an entry to care within 28 days of an exit then this is classified as a single care episode.

We intend to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider public shortly. We will do this by publishing this letter on our website. Your personal details will be deleted and we 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@mvcot.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review this decision. Information about this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by contacting them on 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Steve Groom
General Manager Public, Ministerial and Executive Services