

11 September 2023

Section 9(2)(a)

Section 9(2)(a)

Section 9(2)(a)

Our ref: OIA 107002

Tēnā koe Section 9(2)(a)

Official Information Act request: Hague Convention cases

Thank you for your email of 23 August 2023, requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), information relating to Hague Convention cases. Specially, you requested:

- 1. The number of cases filed under the Hague Convention in New Zealand requesting a child or children be returned overseas in the last five years broken down by year.*
- 2. The number of cases filed under the Hague Convention in another country requesting a child or children be returned to New Zealand in the last five years broken down by year.*
- 3. The cost of providing legal aid to prepare documents for the Central Authority in New Zealand for parents requesting children be returned in the last five years broken down by year.*
- 4. The cost of paying the legal fees for the most expensive case brought under the Hague Convention in New Zealand in the last five years.*

I have numbered your request, for clarity of response. In response to the first two parts of your request, please see the data tables below.

The information has been drawn from the records of the Central Authority, who has been designated to exercise all the duties and functions on behalf of the Secretary for Justice under section 100 of the Care of Children Act 2004 as Central Authority for the 1980 Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (the Convention). There is more information about the Convention and the Central Authority at: justice.govt.nz/family/care-of-children/stop-or-return-a-child/return-a-child-to-or-from-aotearoa-new-zealand/

Table 1: Incoming return applications

These cases are about children brought to or retained in New Zealand and are decided by the Family Court in New Zealand:

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total	31	32	33	37	35	32	40	34	28	27	20	21

**Note: applications may be withdrawn as agreement is reached and/or parenting orders made.*

Table 2: Outgoing return applications

These cases are about children removed from New Zealand or retained in another contracting state/country:

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total	56	81	67	57	29	54	48	54	47	29	18	32

**Note: applications may be withdrawn as agreement is reached and/or parenting orders made.*

In response to the third and fourth parts of your request, please see the two tables below.

Table 3: Cost of legal assistance

Costs provided by the Central Authority to parents for children brought to New Zealand and for children removed from New Zealand over the last three years:

Year	Incoming	Outgoing	Total
2020	\$134,201.54	\$125,797.71	\$260,005.25
2021	\$224,625.77	\$47,624.50	\$272,250.27
2022	\$223,910.74	\$97,468.55	\$321,379.29

Table 4: Cost of legal assistance

Costs of legal assistance for the most expensive individual case in the last three years:

Year	Incoming	Outgoing
2020	\$18,099.03	\$26,653.44
2021	\$56,792.16	\$64,55.36
2022	\$47,303.32	\$11,138.44

If you require any further information, please contact Media & Social Media Manager Joe Locke at media@justice.govt.nz.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website at: justice.govt.nz/about/official-information-act-requests/oia-responses/.

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Act. The Office of the Ombudsman may be contacted by email to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phone on 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā



PA Bailey
Manager, Central Authority