

9 January 2024

Section 9(2)(a)

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Tēnā koe

Official Information Act 1982 request

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request of 1 December 2023 for information on Coroners Court case closure times by region and nationally. Your request and my responses are set out below.

1. *The average time (number of days) for coroners to complete their investigations per financial year:*
 - a. *per region for the year to 30 June 2023.*
 - b. *per region for the year to 30 June 2022.*
 - c. *per region for the year to 30 June 2021.*
 - d. *nationally for the year to 30 June 2023.*
 - e. *nationally for the year to 30 June 2022.*
 - f. *nationally for the year to 30 June 2021.*
2. *The average time (number of days) for coroners to complete their investigations per calendar year:*
 - a. *per region for the year to 31 December 2023*.*
 - b. *per region for the year to 31 December 2022.*
 - c. *per region for the year to 31 December 2021.*
 - d. *nationally for the year to 31 December 2023.**
 - e. *nationally for the year to 31 December 2022.*
 - f. *nationally for the year to 31 December 2021.*

** If information is not available to 31 December 2023, please provide to the nearest available date and tell me what that date is.*

Please note, the regional breakdown for this request should be based on the coronial regional offices (Whangārei, Auckland, Hamilton, Rotorua, Hastings, Palmerston North, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin.)

3. *Any background information that might help me to interpret this data.*

In response to your request, please find Table 1 enclosed. Table 1 provides the average age in days of Coroners Court cases at closure, by Coroners Court regional office and nationally, for the 12 months ending 30 June 2021 to 2023, 31 December 2021 to 2022, and 30 November 2023. Please note that data for the 12 month period ending 31 December 2023 has not been included as your request was made prior to this date, and the data was extracted on 4 December 2023.

This data has been provided by Coroners Court regional office. When interpreting these numbers, it is important to understand that the Coroners Court regional office is not necessarily the region where the death occurred. This is due to the way cases are assigned to coroners for investigation.

To manage the allocation of cases across coroners, the Chief Coroner allocates new cases to one of four geographic catchment areas, known as “clusters”. Within each of the four clusters, coroners take turns being the receiving coroner. This means that a death may be investigated by a coroner in a regional office different to where the death occurred. For example, a death may occur in Dunedin but be investigated by a coroner based in the Christchurch Coroners Court regional office.

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

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to complain to the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the OIA. You can contact the Office of the Ombudsman by writing to PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143; calling 0800 802 602; or emailing info@ombudsman.parliament.nz

I trust that this information assists.

Nāku noa, nā



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Ref: OIA 108401

Encl: Table 1: Average age in days of Coroners Court cases at closure, by Coroners Court regional office and nationally, for the 12 months ending 30 June 2021 to 2023, 31 December 2021 to 2022, and 30 November 2023

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Coroners Court regional office	12 months ending 30 June 2021	12 months ending 31 December 2021	12 months ending 30 June 2022	12 months ending 31 December 2022	12 months ending 30 June 2023	12 months ending 30 November 2023
Auckland	454	479	512	499	482	471
Christchurch	546	526	528	550	598	602
Dunedin	644	632	687	758	679	681
Hamilton	291	311	349	351	358	419
Hastings	530	509	520	579	535	627
Palmerston North	503	518	512	469	543	606
Rotorua	301	339	343	320	335	453
Wellington	490	421	415	439	459	535
Whangārei	539	559	577	517	497	524
National average	479	480	498	493	495	536

Notes for Table 1:

- This data was extracted from the case management system used by the Coroners Court as at 4 December 2023 and may differ from previously released or published data.
- Cases are included based on the date the case was notified to the coroner, which can differ from the date of death.
- This data only includes closed cases which have a cause of death that has been determined by the coroner, where a finding or certificate has been issued.
- Case age is counted as the time in days between the death being notified to the coroner and the date when the final findings were issued.