

Ombudsman releases latest OIA data

27 February 2018

Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier today released the Office's latest data on Official Information Act complaints and outcomes.

The Office of the Ombudsman received 673 OIA complaints in the last six months of 2017, mostly concerning full or partial refusal of information or a delay in response.

Four hundred and seven complaints came from private individuals; this was more than three times as many as from media organisations, who made 138 complaints.

Peter Boshier encouraged agencies to use the data to monitor their OIA performance.

'The OIA is central to our open democracy. It gives people access to information about the decisions that affect their lives, and it's good for trust and engagement with government. My Office will continue with its programme of incentives and interventions with agencies to encourage an overall lift in OIA performance', Peter Boshier says.

'I believe this work has contributed to New Zealand's public sector being ranked as the least corrupt in the world according to Transparency International's 2017 world rankings released last week.'

Peter Boshier says in the future, he intends to include data on complaints and outcomes under the OIA's 'twin legislation', the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act.

At the same time as the Office published its complaints and outcomes data, the State Services Commission published its data on OIA requests and response times. It shows that the vast majority of agencies achieved more than 90 percent compliance with timeliness requirements.

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View the Ombudsman's data on OIA complaints for July to December 2017 [here](#)

View the SSC data on OIA requests and responses for July to December 2017 [here](#)

Questions and answers on the Ombudsman's OIA data

What's the data about?

The data released by the Office of the Ombudsman concerns OIA complaints and complaint resolution from July to December 2017. It includes information on:

- the number of complaints received by Minister or agency
- the nature of the complaint and type of complainant (media, private individual, etc)
- the outcome of the complaint, including whether any administrative deficiency was identified and if so the remedy.

How do the different agencies compare?

- The data doesn't enable a direct comparison among agencies, as complaints data on its own doesn't give the full picture. The number of complaints one agency receives may be a very small proportion of its total number of OIA requests.
- The purpose of the data is to provide information on the overall number and type of complaints received by the Ombudsman, and the outcome of an investigation. This will be useful for showing trends over time, and we encourage agencies to use the data for self-review purposes.

What are most complaints about?

- Most complaints concerned the refusal of an official information request. One hundred and forty seven complaints were about a refusal in full; 179 were about a refusal in part. One hundred and fourteen complaints were about a delay in decision.

Who makes the most complaints?

- Individual members of the public made 407 complaints—nearly two-thirds of the total. Next were media, who made 138 complaints in the last six months of 2017.
- Other complainant groups included trade unions, MPs, and local authorities.