

## Latest OIA, and first set of LGOIMA data, released by the Ombudsman

4 September 2019

The Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier has released his latest Official Information Act (OIA) data, and, for the first time, the equivalent data for the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act (LGOIMA) which covers local, regional and unitary councils<sup>1</sup>.

The number of OIA complaints received by the Office of the Ombudsman in the six months from 1 January to 30 June 2019 was 693, a decrease of 30 (4.1%) from the previous six months. The number of LGOIMA complaints was 165.

After removing a statistical anomaly from the previous data<sup>2</sup>, the Office resolved 30 more complaints than it received for the OIA, and 13 fewer for the LGOIMA.

“Even on slightly less volume, it is pleasing to see that overall we are completing more complaints than we are receiving. It shows we are becoming even more efficient, after eliminating a backlog built up over several years ago,” says Mr Boshier.

“Our performance underscores the increasing confidence in my Office to deal with issues, and our focus on timely investigations and resolutions.”

Mr Boshier noted that the patterns for the reasons of complaint were unchanged – delays, incomplete or inadequate responses, and refusals by agencies to release information in part or full.

“I call on all agencies to make improvements in these areas. It requires a concentrated effort from everyone from the time a request first appears in your inbox to the final sign off.”

Mr Boshier said it was pleasing the LGOIMA data was now available.

“It’s important that we report across as many government agencies as possible, and the addition of local body data will give the public even more insights into the complaints we are receiving and the performance of public organisations.

“My Office continues to play a vital role in informing and educating the public and government sectors on how the OIA works and how they can be more efficient and accessible to New Zealanders. I am actively encouraging agencies to be proactive in releasing information that promotes transparency and accountability in the public sector.

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<sup>1</sup> This includes all city, district and regional councils, as well as council controlled organisations, community boards, domain boards, public reserves boards and licensing trusts among others. [See Schedules 1 & 2 LGOIMA for more details.](#)

<sup>2</sup> The July-December 2018 figures were inflated due to 471 complaints from one individual relating to delayed responses from school Boards of Trustees.

“I’m also heartened to see the State Services Commission has reported a significant increase in the number of OIA responses that have been proactively published.”

The Office of the Ombudsman has now delivered outcomes for more than 4600 OIA complaints received in the past three years.

### About the data

The data released by the Office of the Ombudsman concerns OIA complaints received and complaint resolution from January to June 2019. 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), and the outcome of the complaint.

The data does not enable a direct comparison among agencies, as complaints data on its own does not give the full picture. The number of complaints received by the Ombudsman may be a very small proportion of the total number of OIA requests received by an agency.

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.

At the same time as the Office published its complaints and outcomes data, the State Services Commission published its data on OIA requests received by agencies and their response times.

View the Ombudsman’s data on OIA complaints for January to June 2019 [here](#).

The State Services Commission timeliness statistics can be viewed [here](#).

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Complaints received	Received	Company / association / incorporated society	Individual	Media
LGOIMA	165	9	136	20
OIA	693	42	451	146
Received – reasons	Delay in decision	Incomplete / inadequate response	Refusal in full	Refusal in part
LGOIMA	40	23	50	21
OIA	140	46	269	107
Complaints completed	Completed	Company / association / incorporated society	Individual	Media
LGOIMA	152	12	119	19
OIA	1196 <sup>3</sup> (725)	40	988 <sup>3</sup> (517)	118

<sup>3</sup> The July-December 2018 figures were inflated due to 471 complaints from one individual relating to delayed responses from school Boards of Trustees. The adjusted figures are in brackets.