

Request for medical waiver statistics

Legislation	Official Information Act 1982, s 18(f)
Agency	Department of Labour
Ombudsman	Beverley Wakem
Case number(s)	174675
Date	March 2007

Task involved in manually reviewing tens of thousands of applications was ‘substantial’

A requester sought the number of people applying for residence who had been granted medical waivers in the previous three years. The former Department of Labour supplied figures for the previous six months, but refused the remainder of the request on grounds of substantial collation or research. The Department explained that this information had only recently been recorded electronically in a way that could be queried by its case management system. To provide figures for the entire period, it would need to manually review up to 150,000 applications.

During the Ombudsman’s investigation, it was established that a word search of the Department’s case management system could identify a smaller number of relevant applications requiring review. However, the Department would still need to manually review tens of thousands of applications. The Ombudsman accepted this would involve the diversion of personnel for a significant period of time, and that the task involved would be ‘substantial’.

This case note is published under the authority of the [Ombudsmen Rules 1989](#). It sets out an Ombudsman’s view on the facts of a particular case. It should not be taken as establishing any legal precedent that would bind an Ombudsman in future.