

# Costs of OIA Requests (March 2021)

## Request

In March 2021 there was an Official Information Act request asking about the costs associated with OIA requests.

## Response

We responded by email, with our answers **in bold** below:

Dear Sir or Madam,

Official information request: charging for Official Information Act requests

Please supply the following information under the Official Information Act (OIA):

1. Does your organisation have a policy or guidelines in relation to charging requestors for supplying information under the Official Information Act 1982?

**We don't have formal guidelines but as discussed we take a pragmatic approach and don't tend to charge for information. In a small number of cases, when we explain the complexity and reason why we are thinking about charging, the requester has narrowed their scope to a point where we have been able to do the work without charging.**

**Here's an example from 2019 of how we navigate this type of request:**

*Kia ora requester,*

***We have collated a large amount of material regarding your request. This will take us considerable time to read through and assess, and then make, redactions. I would like to make a suggestion that would make this easier for us and hopefully be more targeted in providing you the information you want to access. Attached is a list of the documents we've collected that are captured by your request. If you would like to have a look at the names of the documents perhaps you could identify which you would like sent to you? If you would like all the documents I will ask a temping agency for a quote of the cost of this work that I will need to charge you for and get back to you with that. I will also extend the time required to respond. We are a small team here with large workloads so I am keen to help you but it needs to be within the limits we have.***

***Warm regards***

2. If yes, please supply a written copy of the policy/guideline, including grounds for seeking costs for supplying information, charges for photocopying, scanning or other copying of information and the hourly rate for staff time in compiling requests?

**As an office of 25 people the issue is staff time. We have paid contractors, at no cost to the requester, previously to assist us with this work. Most recently we have paid \$40 an hour for OIA work. We would charge between \$40 and \$80 if we needed to charge a requestor to cover the additional cost.**

3. If not, what does your organisation charge for photocopying, scanning or other copying of information and what is the hourly rate for staff time in compiling requests?

**As above staff capacity is the issue for us so for larger or time consuming OIAs we'd use contractors and pay \$40-\$80 per hour, depending on the skills needed.**

In the 12 months from 01 January 2020 to December 31, 2020:

4. How many requests for information under the Official Information Act did your organisation receive?

**We do also get complaints and inquiries which are technically OIAs of which there are about 500 a year.**

5. Of these, in how many was the requestor advised that they would incur charges for copying and staff time, or any other reason?

**We advised a requester we may need to charge but this was resolved without that being necessary.**

6. In how many of these, did the requestor pay the required charge for supplying of information?

**Nil**

7. In total, how much did your organisation receive in payments for supplying information under the OIA?

**Nil**

8. What were the largest 10 amounts paid by requestors in charges for fulfilling OIA requests?

**Nil**

If you need any more information from me, please let me know as soon as possible. I understand that a decision on a request for information under the OIA should be made within 20 working days of receiving that request.

If you do not normally deal with official information requests, or you need advice on dealing with this request, guidance is available from the Ombudsman at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz).

Yours faithfully

[Redacted]

