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28 October 2025

s 9(2)(a)

Ref: H2025073376

Tēnā koe s 9(2)(a)

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health – Manatū Hauora (the Ministry) on 29 September 2025. Each part of your request has been addressed in turn. You requested:

The number of New Zealand-registered health practitioners (nurses, doctors, allied health, midwives) who have applied for registration to practice in Australia in the past three years (or financial years) since 2022. Please break down by profession and by year until present.

The number of those practitioners who, after registering or applying, have left New Zealand health employment to take up roles in Australia (to the extent that the Ministry or relevant body holds that data), broken down by year since 2022, and also in the past 12 months.

Any internal reports, analyses, workforce planning documents or correspondence since that assess or predict the outflow of NZ health workers to Australia, including comparative data with inflows, retention strategy, or cost to the NZ health system.

Any financial modelling or estimates of the cost to NZ's health system from training, recruiting, and losing health professionals to Australia (e.g. "brain drain" cost estimates).

The Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Agreement 1997 (TTMRA) applies to health practitioner occupations where individuals undertake substantially the same activities, for example nursing. This means that a New Zealand registered nurse can apply for recognition to practice in Australia. There is no requirement for an individual to advise the registering body in New Zealand of this. As such, the Ministry does not hold the number of health practitioners who have applied for registration to practice in Australia or who have left New Zealand to take up employment in Australia.

Therefore section 18(g)(i) of the Act applies to these parts of your request, that the information is not held by the department and there are no grounds for believing the information is held by another agency subject to the Act.

The Ministry is aware of this issue of health practitioners moving to Australia, including overseas practitioners who register in New Zealand and move to Australia without working in New Zealand. The responsible authorities established under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 are the bodies mandated to set standards and processes for registration. These bodies may hold information that is relevant to your request. Although they are not subject to the Official Information Act 1982, you may wish to contact them.

For example, the Nursing Council publishes workforce reports which include details of practicing nurses that may live overseas: nursingcouncil.org.nz/Public/NCNZ/publications-section/Workforce_statistics.aspx. The Council is also aware of the increased registrations from international nurses. It has increased its capacity to process any additional applications and is working to reduce the perception that New Zealand's registration is easier to attain.

Additionally, the Nursing Council collects information on 'letters of good standing' which nurses must request for before applying for registration in Australia. The information the council holds does not confirm if they actually left New Zealand, as some nurses apply for a letter of good standing and subsequently decide to remain in New Zealand.

You maybe be interested in the recent Workforce survey published by the Medical Council of New Zealand: www.mcnz.org.nz/assets/Publications/Workforce-Survey/Workforce-Survey-Report-2025.pdf.

Any agreements, memorandum or policies relating to mutual recognition, credential transfer, or cross-border registration (NZ ↔ Australia) for health professionals, including changes in that framework.

Additionally if there is any corresponding data that reflects how many foreign healthcare workers come to New Zealand for work during this same period.

On 13 October 2025 the Ministry informed you that it does not hold any information in relation to parts 5 and 6 of your request and that these parts of your request were transferred under section 14(b)(i) of the Act. You can expect a response from Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora in due course. They can be contacted at: HNZOIA@tewhatauora.govt.nz.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request with us, including this decision, please feel free to contact the OIA Services Team on: oiagr@health.govt.nz.

Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests.

Nāku noa, nā



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