

31 JAN 2020

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Ref: H202000213

Dear [REDACTED]

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) which was transferred from the Department of Internal Affairs and received by the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) on 16 January 2020 for:

"In this country abortion is fully funded, I want to know the total amount of money that was spent on abortion in 2019."

The Ministry does not hold information on the total spend on abortion services in 2019. There are several services involved in the care for a woman who is seeking an abortion. The process for seeking an abortion usually starts with an appointment with a general practitioner (GP) and may involve blood tests, swabs and an ultrasound. There are also appointments with at least two certifying consultants, counselling services, the abortion procedure itself (which can be medical or surgical) and any follow up consultations required. There may also be travel costs associated with accessing these services. Many of these services are free for women to access however, some may involve a patient co-payment, including appointments in general practice. These services are delivered in numerous parts of the health system and services may be classified as sexual and reproductive health, without specifically being recorded as a cost relating to abortion. As a result, there is not a single source of data that captures all abortion services costs.

The Ministry does not allocate specific funding to district health boards (DHBs) for abortion services. DHBs are bulk funded using a population-based formula and make decisions on the level and mix of services they can provide in order to meet the needs of their local populations. This includes how the DHBs provide abortion services. The cost of a publicly funded abortion procedure in a DHB is approximately \$400 for a medical abortion, a surgical abortion in the first trimester is approximately \$1000 and \$1600 in the second trimester. The Ministry does not hold information on the total spend on abortion services in the health system, however you may wish to approach the individual DHBs directly for information they may hold regarding expenditure on abortion procedures.

Costs associated with oversight of the abortion system (including administering the licensing regime and fees for certifying consultants) are met by the Ministry of Justice. The total cost

of fees for certifying consultants last year was \$3,965,112.20. The costs for administering the Abortion Supervisory Committee (ASC) falls within the baseline funding of the Ministry of Justice and this figure is publicly available in the ASC 2019 report on their website:
<https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/ASC-Annual-Report-2019.pdf>.

You have the right, under section 28 of the Act, to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request.

Please note that this response (with your personal details removed) may be published on the Ministry website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maree Roberts". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Maree" and last name "Roberts" clearly legible.

Maree Roberts
Deputy Director-General
System Strategy and Policy