

29 July 2022

Matthew Hooton  
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Tēnā koe Matthew,

**Your Official Information Act request, reference H2022006900:**

Thank you for your email of 7 July 2022 requesting information relating to mortality data from 15 March 2022.

As part of the transformation of the health and disability system, as of 1 July 2022 the functions previously under the Ministry of Health's Data and Digital directorate have now transferred to Te Whatu Ora - Health New Zealand. As the matters you have raised now fall under the functions of Te Whatu Ora, our agency will respond to your request which has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). I shall quote and respond to each part of your request below.

*1) How many people died in New Zealand on 15 March 2022*

Te Whatu Ora has received provisional death registration information from Births, Deaths and Marriages in the Department of Internal Affairs that shows 115 people died in New Zealand on 15 March 2022. This number may be subject to small change as information about late death registrations is received.

*2) The causes of these deaths, eg, Covid, heart failure, car accident, homicide, cancer etc.*

Information about the causes of death for people who died on 15 March 2022 is not available as this information has not yet been collated. Therefore, this part of your request for information relating to causes of death is refused under section 18(g)(i) as the information requested is not held by Te Whatu Ora and there are no grounds for believing it is held by another agency subject to the Act.

After the close of a calendar year, there is a 12-18 month process to assign cause of death codes to the majority of deaths in that year. Te Whatu Ora's clinical coding team reviews the death certificate and health history of the deceased to assign cause of death codes. Approximately 10% of deaths are referred to the Coroner each year to determine cause. Deaths which require a coronial inquiry can take 2-3 or more years for cause of death to be assigned. We do not make mortality data available publicly until the majority of deaths have been assigned a cause of death, so that the data we release is complete and accurate.

The Te Whatu Ora publishes preliminary mortality statistics, which do not include information about injury-related deaths which are typically more influenced by coronial cases, in December each year. The 2020 preliminary data will be published in December 2022.

I trust the information provided is of assistance. You are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Information about how to do this is available at: [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or by phoning 0800 802 602.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, Te Whatu Ora may decide to proactively release a copy of this response on our website. All requester data, including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release.

Nāku iti noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Gaynor Bradfield  
**Manager**  
**Office of the Chief Data and Digital**