

09 MAY 2013

David Burgess
fyi-request-817-40c6ec0a@requests.fyi.org.nz

NATIONAL OFFICE WELLINGTON
80 Boulcott Street
PO Box 2628, Wellington 6140
Free phone 0800 801 601
Tel 04 439 3000
www.hnzc.co.nz

Dear Mr Burgess

Thank you for your email of 10 April 2013 to Housing New Zealand requesting information under the Official Information Act 1982. You request the following information specific to non-governmental agencies:

- (1) At what level is a request for the supply of personal information approved?*
- (2) Is an audit process used to ensure personal information is not supplied when it should have been withheld?*
- (3) If there is such a process, what is it?*
- (4) You say that you would only release information on a customer with the customer's consent. Is this consent:
 - (a) Obtained by you by contacting the customer when a request for information is received?*
 - (b) Held on your files?*
 - (c) Not held on your files but always sighted by you before information is released?*
 - (d) Neither obtained, held or sighted by you. (It is based on assurance by the requester that they hold consent.)**
- (5) If any information is released on the basis that the requester assures you that they hold the relevant consent, how often is this audited and what is the audit process?*
- (6) Does HNZN management require any kind of reporting on the release of personal information to private agencies? and if so what data is provided to management?*

I have considered your request under the Act. Housing New Zealand has guidelines for dealing with the release of personal information. Staff are also supported by a Privacy Officer who can provide legal advice and is available to review any release of personal information.

The release of personal information is approved at various management levels at Housing New Zealand, depending on the information and to whom the request was made. Requests for personal information about a customer by anyone other than the customer are unusual and will be reviewed and approved by a manager, before that information is

released. There is no central auditing process for this; however, complaints are taken seriously and are reviewed by senior staff in conjunction with our legal team.

As I advised in my letter of 11 March 2013, Housing New Zealand only releases personal information with that person's consent, or where required by law. If we did not previously obtain consent from a customer, an agency is required to supply us with a customer's written consent prior to the release of personal information. This is generally consent that the customer has previously given an agency.

Housing New Zealand does not centrally record and report on the release of personal information. Requests for personal information are received on an ad hoc basis, and are relatively infrequent. There is no legal requirement to record this information.

It may also be useful to note that Housing New Zealand's business is to house those most in need, for the duration of their need. As a social landlord, the release of personal information, with the customer's consent, does not affect the management of our core business.

I trust this information is useful. Thank you again for writing.

Yours sincerely



Sharon Giryan
Manager Government Relations (Acting)