

27 November 2023

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Tēnā koe Hannah

Your request for Official information, reference: HN200032247

Thank you for your request on 7 November 2023, asking for the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Your request has been transferred to us by the Department of Internal Affairs on 16 November:

"I am requesting information pertaining to excess death rates pertaining to the Kaikoura District (only)

Can you please provide excess death rates; non covid related; pertaining to the Kaikoura District (only) for the following years : 2020/ 2021/ 2022/ upto and including present day 2023.

Can you please provide excess death rates; covid related; pertaining to the Kaikoura District (only) for the following years : 2020/ 2021/ 2022/ upto and including present day 2023."

Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand does not hold data relating to excess deaths specifically for the Kaikōura area. Therefore, your request is declined under section 18(e) of the Act as the information does not exist.

The following information is relevant to your request and may be of interest.

The number of deaths registered during 2022 was 38,574, up 3,642 (10.4 percent) from the previous year. The increased number of deaths in 2022 was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. On [COVID-19 Trends and Insights](#) published by Manatū Hauora, just under 2,400 deaths in 2022 were identified as people who died with the cause of death being attributable to COVID-19.

The increase in deaths in 2021 and 2022 (to 34,932 and 38,574 deaths respectively) comes after a drop in deaths in 2020. In 2020, there were 32,613 deaths, with deaths over winter being much lower than in other years.

Aotearoa experienced changes in the risk of death from any cause across the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. Taken as a whole, evidence suggests that Aotearoa has not experienced an excess of deaths during the pandemic. Over the winter of 2020, there was a reduction in deaths compared to what was expected based on previous years. In 2021, there was a slight reduction in deaths. Due to border restrictions and alert level restrictions, respiratory viruses such as influenza and the common cold were circulating at significantly lower levels than in previous years, likely accounting for most of the reduction in expected mortality in 2020 and 2021. Over the winter of 2022, there was potentially an excess of deaths compared to what was expected based on previous years.

You might also be interested in the Ministry of Health's report on Inequalities in COVID-19 deaths, which can be found here: [COVID-19 Mortality in Aotearoa New Zealand: Inequities in Risk \(health.govt.nz\)](https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/inequalities-in-covid-19-deaths)

For more information about cause of death - Te Whatu Ora has a [Mortality-web-tool](#) that presents mortality and demographic data for deaths registered in New Zealand from 1948 to 2020. The [Mortality Collection](#) classifies the underlying cause of death for all deaths registered in Aotearoa New Zealand. Please note that data for 2019 and 2020 is preliminary, while data for 2018 and previous years is final.

After the close of a calendar year, there is a 12 to 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. Te Whatu Ora publishes preliminary mortality statistics, which do not include injury-related deaths information which are typically more influenced by coronial cases, in December each year. Preliminary data for 2021 will be published into the web tool in December 2023.

Statistics New Zealand also publish information on all-cause mortality at the following link: <https://infoshare.stats.govt.nz/>. Select 'Populations' and then 'Deaths'.

How to get in touch

If you have any questions, you can contact us at hnzOIA@health.govt.nz.

If you are not happy with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman. Information about how to do this is available at 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 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



Michael Cleary
Acting OIA Manager
Government Services