

10<sup>th</sup> February 2021

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Dear [Redacted]

**Official Information Act Request for – Body tissue/organs/products returned to patients**

I write in response to your Official Information Act request received by us 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021, you requested the following information:

- **The total number of body part items returned to patients by the DHB during the calendar years of 2020, 2019, and 2018, broken down by the specific type of body part (including but not limited to, body tissue, bones, organs, placentas/products of conception) returned each year.**

**Counties Manukau Health Response:**

The CM Health Bereavement Care Service primarily manages the process for return of body parts to patients and families, including tissue sent to histology for testing, and items from theatre where a request has been made for return of items to the patient involved following surgery.

To obtain a further breakdown of specific body parts returned to patients e.g. limb, organ, tissue, product of conception etc. would involve manually searching each individual file. Therefore, we are declining to provide this specific part of your request under s.18(f) of the Official Information Act 1982 as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

Table 1 below reflects a summary of items returned to patients.

Summary of Items returned to patients			
	2018	2019	2020
Tissue Uplifted by Patient/Family	395	398	404
No Return Tissue Available - Requested by patient however all tissue was used during testing	97	125	146
Tissue Disposed of by Cremation	589	933	1020
<b>Total Tissue Managed by Bereavement Care</b>	<b>1081</b>	<b>1456</b>	<b>1570</b>

Source: Bereavement Care Services

Please note, some of the tissue disposed of by cremation was originally requested for return however when the patient was contacted by the Bereavement Care Service the patient then requested that

Bereavement Care arrange for the tissue to be cremated on their behalf. In other instances, where there has been no response to letters, phone calls or text messages the tissue has then been disposed of by cremation.

I trust this information answers your request. You are entitled to seek a review of the response by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or Freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response or an edited version of this may be published on the Counties Manukau Health website. If you consider there are good reasons why this response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider this.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'F. Apa', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

**Fepulea'i Margie Apa**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Counties Manukau Health**