



Te Tāhū Hauora
Health Quality & Safety
Commission

24 April 2025

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Via email: [REDACTED]

Tēnā [REDACTED]

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request of 1 April 2025, which has subsequently been transferred to Te Tāhū Hauora Health Quality and Safety Commission on 16 April 2025. Your request asked for:

- 1) *Since January 1 2023, copies of any reports, briefings or documents regarding so-called freebirthing, also known as unassisted birthing (intentionally giving birth without doctors or midwives present).*
- 2) *Since January 1 2023, the number of babies known to have died during or soon after identified cases of freebirthing/unassisted birthing.*
- 3) *Since January 1 2023, the number of mothers known to have died during or soon after identified cases of freebirthing/unassisted birthing.”*

Our last comprehensive report on Maternal and Perinatal Mortality was published last year, with data to 2021 [16thPMMRCReport_FINAL.pdf](#). This report does not specifically examine free-birthing, and it is not reported as significant contributor to the deaths reported.

Understanding the circumstances relevant to a death requires consideration of all available information, including collating and considering the relevant data and Coroners findings, hence the time delay between the event and mortality review reporting.

With regard to part one of your request, no such documents exist, therefore this part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act.

With regard to parts two and three of your request, the Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act 2022 provides guidance around the conditions for release of National Mortality Review Committee data. In particular, Schedule 5 of the Pae Ora Act notes the following:

4 Prohibitions on production, disclosure, and recording of information

(1) A member or executive officer or agent of a mortality review committee must not produce or disclose information to another person or in any judicial proceeding, or make any record of it, unless the production, disclosure, or record is—

- (a) for the purposes of performing the committee's functions; or
- (b) in accordance with an exception stated in clause 5; or
- (c) in accordance with a ministerial authority.

5 Exceptions to prohibitions

Clause 4 does not prohibit—

- (a) the production, disclosure, or recording of information if the information does not identify, either expressly or by implication, any particular individual:
- (b) the disclosure of information—
 - (i) with the consent of every person who would be directly or indirectly identified by the disclosure:
 - (ii) to the Minister, or a person authorised by the Minister, for the purpose of enabling the Minister to decide whether or not to issue a ministerial authority:
 - (iii) for the purposes of the prosecution of an offence against section 82(6) (disclosure of information contrary to this schedule).

Regarding the particulars of your questions, the numbers are small and are still in the early stages of collection and analysis, and release of them would be likely to identify individuals, consequently, in accordance with Schedule 5 of the Pae Ora Act, your request is refused.

If you have any queries or would like to add any additional information relevant to your request, please contact us at info@hqsc.govt.nz.

You are entitled, under section 28(2) of the Act, to seek an investigation and review of this decision by the Ombudsman.

Nāku noa, nā



Bevan Sloan
Acting Chief Executive
Te Tāhū Hauora Health Quality & Safety Commission

