

06 July 2022



s9(2)(a)

Dear s9(2)(a),

Thank you for your request, received on 18 June 2022, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) for the following information regarding the Electricity Authority's (Authority) collection of data related to the impact of Covid-19 on electricity in New Zealand:

1. *“how this information is used by EA*
2. *what's the trends are indicating across the industry that this information is depicting*
3. *what decision, if any, has this information helped influence within the EA”*

The Authority collects information from electricity retailers in order to understand the impact Covid-19 has had on the electricity industry under section 46 of the Electricity Industry Act (2010). The Authority requests and receives updated metrics each month aggregated by month from electricity retailers. The Authority uses this to monitor consumer stress and to update the Minister of Energy and Resources on the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on the industry. For more information please see this template letter, which was sent to electricity retailers, in regard to the section 46 request: <https://www.ea.govt.nz/assets/dms-assets/26/26652Information-request-Section-46-on-consumer-debt-and-disconnections.pdf>

The Authority refuses your request for current trends that this information is depicting under section 9(2)(b)(ii) and section 9(2)(ba)(i) of the Act. In its current form, the making available of this information would likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information. The withholding of this information is also necessary to protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence or which any person has been or could be compelled to provide under the authority of any enactment, where the making available of the information would be likely to prejudice the supply of similar information, or information from the same source, and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied.

However, in October 2020 we provided aggregated data which publicly reported on our findings, including trends regarding customer inquiries, customer debt levels, and disconnections. This can be found here: <https://www.ea.govt.nz/about-us/media-and-publications/market-commentary/market-insights/covid-19-and-alert-level-effects-on-disconnections-and-debt-september-update/>.

This information has not, at this stage, influenced any policy decisions.

I am satisfied, in terms of section 9(1) of the Act, that the need to withhold the information referred to above is not outweighed by other considerations that render it desirable, in the public interest, to make the information available.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

This letter will be published on the Authority's website.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact us by emailing oiia@ea.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S Gillies', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sarah Gillies
GM Legal, Monitoring and Compliance