

15 April 2024

s9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe s9(2)(a)

Thank you for your request, received on 18 March 2024, for the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

- *“what percentage of the percentage of the population currently is defined as medically dependent, and what is the current status of the Health Practitioner (HP) Notice, where we understood previously this was due to be reviewed.”*

Under the Electricity Authority's (Authority) [Consumer Care Guidelines](#), a medically dependent consumer is defined as “a consumer, whether a customer of a retailer or a consumer permanently or temporarily resident at a customer's premises, who depends on mains electricity for critical medical support, such that loss of electricity may result in loss of life or serious harm. For the avoidance of doubt, medical dependence on electricity could be for use of medical or other electrical equipment needed to support the treatment regime (eg, a microwave to heat fluids for renal dialysis).”

The Authority does not currently collect data from electricity retailers on medically dependent consumer status alone and we do not hold information on the percentage of the population currently defined as medically dependent. This part of your request is therefore declined under section 18(e) of the Act as the document containing the information does not exist.

We have collected some information on medically dependent consumers in the past (2007 to 2021). If you are interested in this information, we would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this.

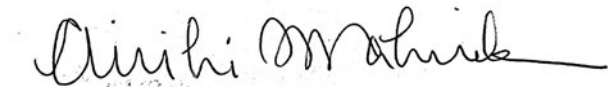
We recently consulted on improvements to our monitoring of the retail market via a new retail market data request. This request will collect specific data on all mass market consumers by ICP and will include information on whether an ICP contains a verified or unverified medically dependent consumer(s). We expect to release a short consultation on the perceived costs and benefits of this notice later this year, which you are welcome to submit on. More information on this project is available on [our website](#). Improving the monitoring of the retail market will help us achieve our statutory objectives and enable us to monitor the Consumer Care Guidelines, which, as [we recently announced](#), will be made mandatory from 1 January 2025.

To further strengthen our protections for medically dependent consumers, the Authority is updating the current 'HP Notice' for medically dependent consumer registration and the emergency response plan (originally developed by ERANZ) in collaboration with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and Health New Zealand - Te Whatu Ora. This project aims to bring these forms into line with the Consumer Care Guidelines recommendations and health sector best practice. The Authority is facilitating engagement with the retail sector, while Te Whatu Ora is working to ensure uptake across hospitals and GPs. Roll-out of the new forms across the retail and health sectors is expected shortly.

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.

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

Nāku noa, nā,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Airihi Mahuika', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Airihi Mahuika

GM Legal, Monitoring and Compliance