

25 October 2019

**Re: Official Information Act request – Guthrie cards damaged in flood**

I refer to your Official Information Act request dated 8 October 2019 requesting the following information.

Please supply the following information under the Official Information Act;

**1. What year did a number of Guthrie cards get severely damaged by a flood?**

The cards were stored on the floor of the attic of the University of Auckland School of Medicine. The damage was discovered when the programme moved into the Wallace Block at Auckland Hospital in 1986. It is not known exactly when the damage occurred. In 1986 the cards were moved to secure commercial storage.

**2. How many Guthrie Cards were damaged?**

About half the cards collected between 1973 and 1980, approximately 200,000.

**3. How many Guthire Cards were discarded?**

All the damaged ones as above.

**4. How were the Guthire Cards discarded of?**

As for other residual medical testing samples, i.e. incinerated.

**5. What cultural considerations were undertaken when the cards were destroyed?**

They were considered to be the same as other medical testing samples. Advice from the Chief Advisor Tikanga is sought for all disposals of medical testing samples.

**6. How many Guthrie cards were stored prior to the NHI system being introduced?**

The NHI system was introduced in 1993 and approximately 60,000 babies are born each year so 1,200,000 cards were stored in that time, of which about 200,000 have been discarded.

**7. How many requests have been made and by which external agencies for Guthrie cards to be used?**

A total of 31 requests have been made by external agencies from 1995 to date.

Requests	Which external agency
23	NZ Police
2	Coroner
3	NZ Court
1	Otago University: Very Low Birth Weight Babies research study
1	Starship Childrens Hospital: VLCADD report and Analyte study
1	Auckland University: Growing Up in NZ Vitamin D study

I trust this information answers your questions.

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 response, may be published on the Auckland DHB website.

Yours faithfully



Ailsa Claire, OBE  
Chief Executive