

4 April 2019

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Via: amy.adams@parliament.govt.nz

Official Information Act Request

Dear Ms Adams

I refer to your request, received by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) on 7 March 2019, for the following information:

1. *A copy of all reports, briefings and data held by the EPA from 1 January 2017 to 1 January 2019 on the incident rate and type of solvent related illnesses in New Zealand.*
2. *Details of any item in your workplan that relate to managing, reducing or educating New Zealanders on solvent related illnesses.*

Your request has been treated as a request for information under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). My response to both parts of your request is provided below.

1. Reports, briefings and data on the incident rate and type of solvent related illnesses in New Zealand

We have interpreted this request to mean any reports, briefings and data held by the EPA regarding illness or injury where solvents are explicitly stated to be a cause or potential cause.

The following documents include information about injury due to solvents:

- *Monitoring the effectiveness of the HSNO Act 2017.*
This report can be found at the following link:
<https://www.epa.govt.nz/assets/RecordsAPI/Monitoring-the-effectiveness-of-the-HSNO-Act-2017.pdf>.
As this report is publicly available, I am withholding it under section 18(d) of the OIA.
- *Monitoring the effectiveness of the HSNO Act 2018.*
As this document will soon be published on the EPA website, I am withholding it under section 18(d) of the OIA. However, Appendix 1 contains the parts of this report which mentions solvents. We will email you a copy of the report once it is published.

When developing the above documents, the EPA referred to several reports that include information about solvents. I am withholding these reports under section 18(d) of the OIA, as they are publicly available (I have provided the links below):

- Report about solvent neurotoxicity in vehicle collision repair workers in New Zealand:
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0161813X16302091?via%3Dihub>

- Report on the biological monitoring of selected chemicals of concern: <https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/report-biological-monitoring-selected-chemicals-concern>
- *Annual Hazardous Substances Injury Report 2017*: <http://www.ehinz.ac.nz/assets/Reports/Annual-Hazardous-Substances-Injury-Report-2017.pdf>
- *Annual Hazardous Substances Injury Report 2016*: <http://www.ehinz.ac.nz/assets/Reports/Annual-Hazardous-Substances-Injury-Report-2016.pdf>

2. Details of any item in your workplan that relate to managing, reducing or educating New Zealanders on solvent related illnesses

The EPA workplan contains three items that relate to hazardous substances in general, including solvents:

- **Safer Homes.** Our Safer Homes programme was established in 2017 to target at-risk communities, and highlights the importance of keeping people safe from the hazardous substances that can be found in homes - such as solvents, paints and thinners, and cleaning chemicals.
- **Hazard substances reassessments.** Our reassessment programme ensures that substances have controls that are fit for purpose.
- **EPA hazardous substance compliance site inspections.** These inspections focus on the approvals, packaging and labelling of hazardous substances.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review of this decision by the Ombudsman. You can contact the Ombudsman on 0800 802 602, or by email at info@ombudsman.parliament.nz.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact us via ministerials@epa.govt.nz.

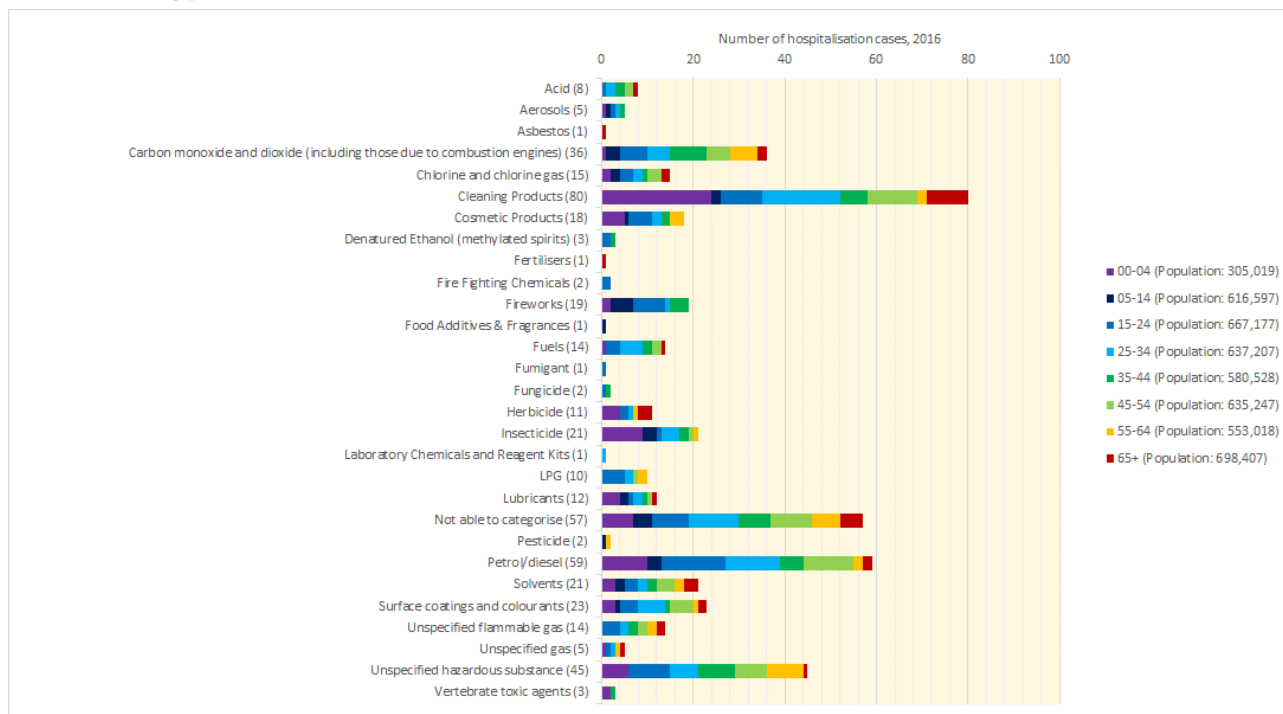
Yours sincerely



Dr Allan L Freeth
Chief Executive
Environmental Protection Authority

Appendix 1: Information from the “Monitoring the effectiveness of the HSNO Act 2018” report

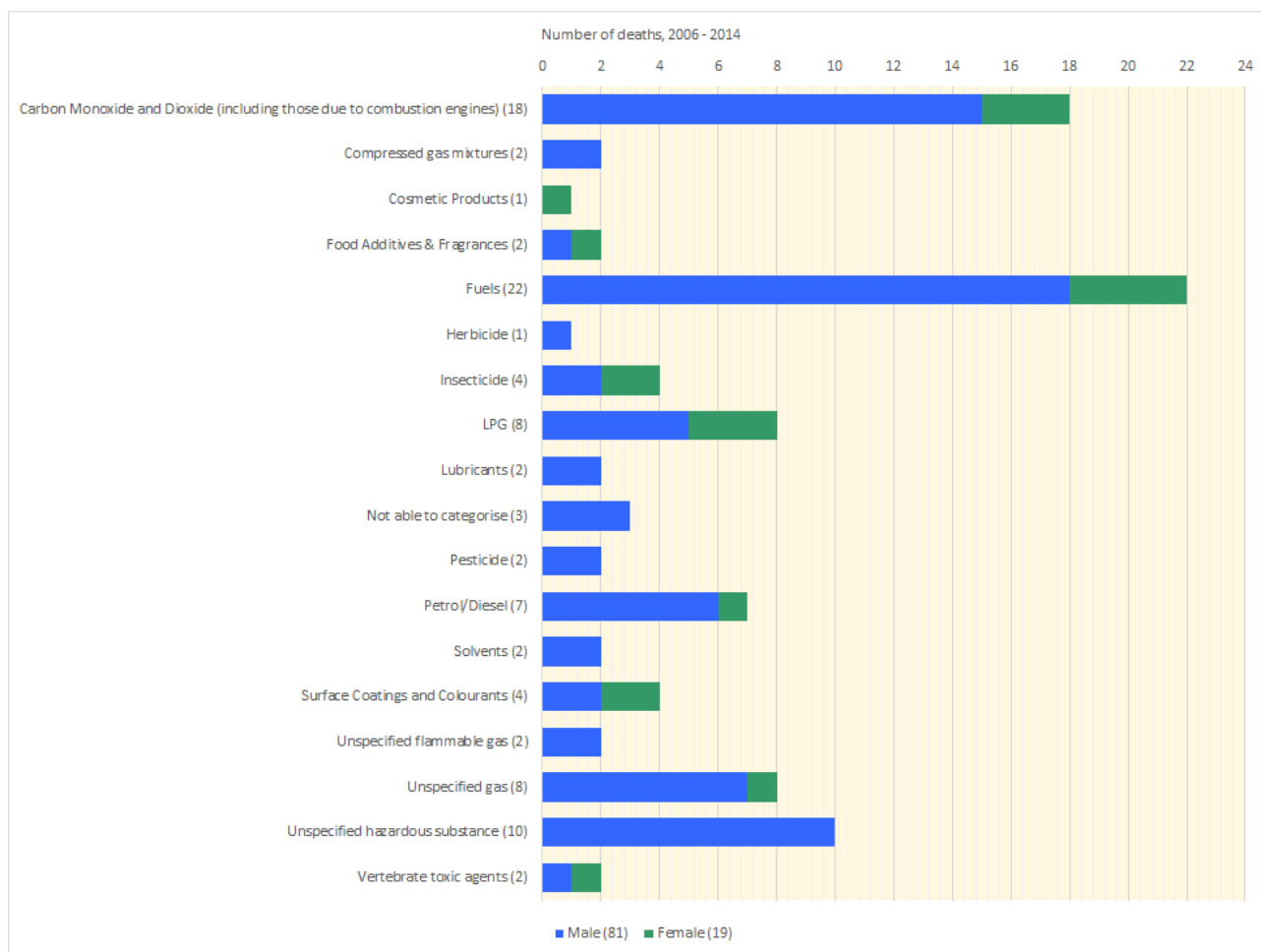
Number of hospitalisations attributed to hazardous substances by age group and substance type, 2016



Data source: Hazardous Substances Surveillance System: National Minimum Dataset. Year ended 31 December 2016.

Data source: Population estimates per year, by age group, <http://nzdotstat.stats.govt.nz/>.

Number of deaths attributed to hazardous substances, by gender and substance, 2006-2014



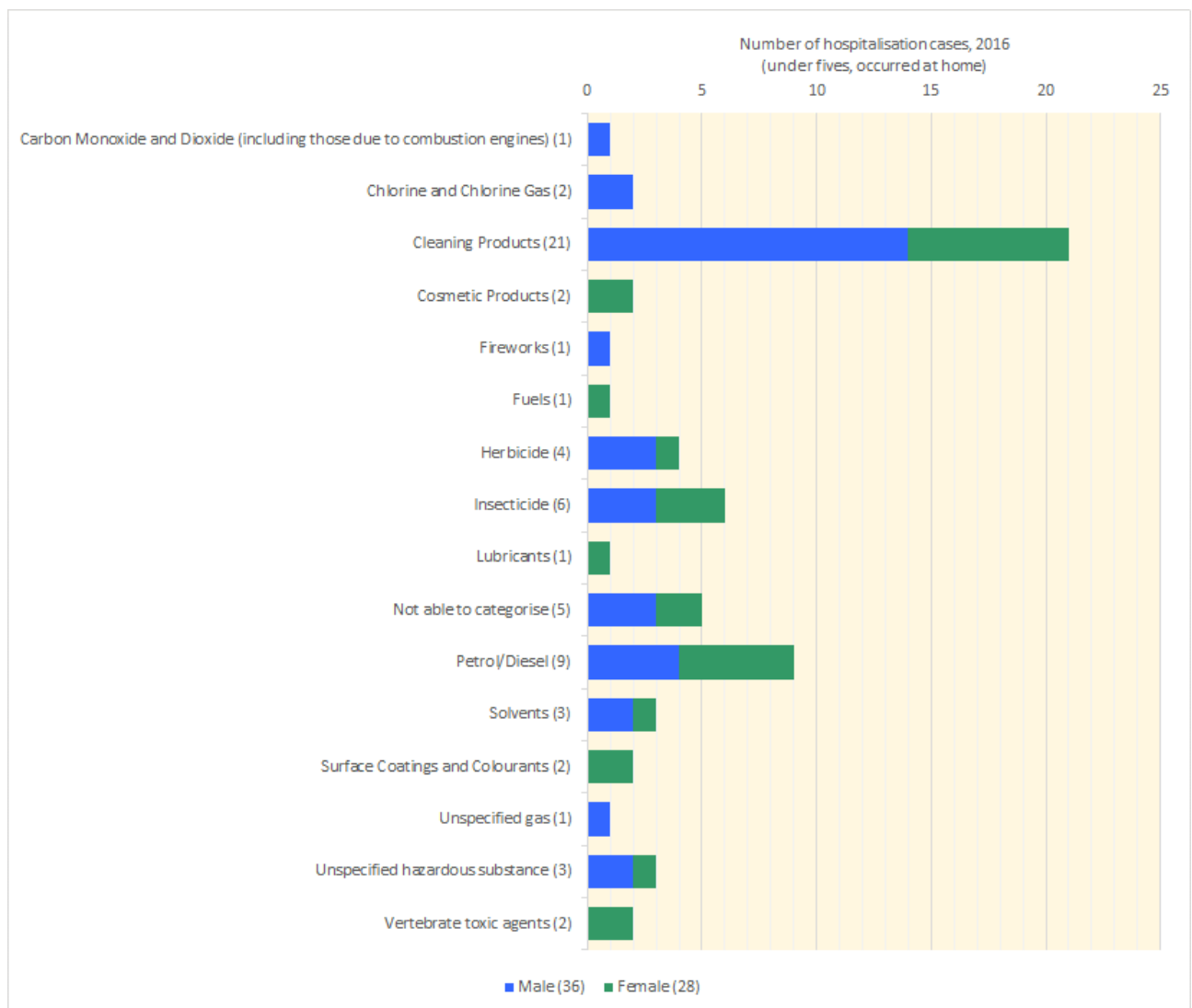
Data source: Hazardous Substances Surveillance System: National Mortality Collection. Year ended 31 December 2014.

Selected clinical notes on cause of death, from the National Mortality Collection dataset

Solvents	Extensive thermal burns from explosion, methamphetamine lab/solvent explosion.
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Note: some comments have been revised for clarity

Number of hospitalisations attributed to hazardous substances, for children under the age of five where the event occurred in the home by substance type and gender, 2016



Data source: Hazardous Substances Surveillance System: National Minimum Dataset. Year ended 31 December 2016.

Selected clinical notes on hospitalisation attributed to children under five, from the National Minimum Dataset

Solvents

Patient put hands in open container of turps, which then splashed.