



7 March 2022

By email: [richard@wifoo.co.nz](mailto:richard@wifoo.co.nz)

Dear Richard

We refer to your information request dated 21 January 2022 made under the Official Information Act 1982 (Act).

You have requested the following information:

- a list of all grants, subsidies and any funding that Professor Michael Baker has received over the last 20 years
- all correspondence that Professor Michael Baker has had with Bill Gates or Anthony Fauci or any entity that they are “substantially associated with or any entity acting in the interests of either of these two men or any entity that they are substantially associated with”. You have provided examples of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- all correspondence that Professor Michael Baker has had with any entity that has provided him with a grant, subsidy or funding.

By your email dated 24 February 2022 you agreed to limit the scope of your request to the last 5 years.

We respond to each of your questions below.

**List of all grants, subsidies and any funding that Professor Michael Baker has received over the last 5 years**

Please see the Appendix to this letter for a list of grants received by Professor Baker in the last 10 years (as at 22 February 2022). Although you limited the scope of the request to the last 5 years, we have been able to provide you with information for the last 10 years, in case this is of interest to you given your original request. We have been able to do this as our Research Office holds electronic records for the last 10 years. A search was done of all research contracts on our database where Professor Baker is listed as the Principal Investigator or was subcontracted by another University to contribute to a project they were leading.

We note that Professor Baker also received funding from being a paid University of Otago staff member (for conducting teaching, supervision etc).

We note that Professor Baker has also received some funding for his contributions to other projects led by other people in the University’s Department of Public Health. These projects mainly related to housing and health research. Providing details of this information would require substantial additional research and collation is accordingly withheld pursuant to section 18(f) of the Act.

**All correspondence that Professor Michael Baker has had with Bill Gates or Anthony Fauci or any entity that they are substantially associated with or any entity acting in the interests of either of these two men or any entity that they are substantially associated with.**

Professor Baker has never had any correspondence with either Mr Gates or Dr Fauci. He had some communication with CDC staff as part of work on influenza and borders around 2006-2008, but we no longer hold copies of these emails (consistent with our obligations under the [Public Records Act](#) and [the New Zealand Universities General Disposal Schedule](#)).

Professor Baker has occasionally communicated with the CDC staff who are editors of the journal "Emerging Infectious Diseases". However, correspondence with editors are subject to obligations of confidence and therefore withheld under s9(2)(ba) of the Act. But, we note that the relevant journal articles are all in the public domain - by searching "Google Scholar" for the terms "Michael Baker" and "Emerging Infectious Diseases".

**All correspondence that Professor Michael Baker has had with any entity that has provided him with a grant, subsidy or funding.**

Collating this information, even for the reduced scope of information relating to the last 5 years, would require extensive staff time and would not be practically manageable, and accordingly we decline to provide this information pursuant to s18(f) of the Act on the basis that it would require substantial research and collation. We also note that some of this information will be commercially sensitive so would in any event would need to be withheld (s9(2)(i) of the Act).

However, we note that the key aspects of what this grant related work involved is in the title of the grants - list in the appendix to this letter.

Further, we note that formal correspondence with funders are normally in the form of grant applications, reports and requests for information. This is primarily done via our Research Office and not directly by Professor Baker. We have explored ways to extract some of the information held by our Research Office, but this too will require extensive staff time and effort. We have also considered whether extending the due date or fixing a charge would enable us to process this request – however after careful assessment, it would still not be practically manageable.

If there is something specific you are wanting, we may be able to review whether this is practically manageable. However, subject to formal assessment of any subsequent request, we note that we may need to charge for the supply of information depending on how many hours of research and collation this requires. We also note that we might be required to consult with externals and may be required to withhold material where information is subject to an obligation of confidence.

In each of the above cases, we consider that good reasons exist for withholding the information and this is not outweighed by other considerations which would make it desirable, in the public interest, to make the information available.

If you are not satisfied with our response to your information request, section 28(3) of the Act provides you with the right to ask an Ombudsman to investigate and review this response.

Yours sincerely



Mayhaka Mendis  
Manager, Policy and Compliance  
Office of the Registrar

## APPENDIX

### Grants received by Professor Michael Baker over last 10 years - as per February 2022

Start Date	Title	Contracting Body	Total
01/10/2020	SYMBIOTIC: Integrated prevention of infectious diseases and long-term conditions	Health Research Council of NZ (HRC)	4,951,981
01/08/2020	Critic and Conscience of Society Award - Gama Foundation	The Gama Foundation	50,000
01/06/2020	Co-Search Covid-19 research programme	Foundation Trust University of Otago	50,000
01/05/2020	COVID-19 Pandemic in Aotearoa NZ: Impact, Inequalities & Improving our response	Foundation Trust University of Otago	215,000
01/05/2020	COVID-19 Pandemic in Aotearoa NZ: Impact, Inequalities & Improving our response	Health Research Council of NZ (HRC)	497,056
01/05/2020	Predict and Prevent COVID-19: A Data Driven Innovation Project	Victoria University, Wellington	27,317
01/02/2020	Healthy and Sustainable Environments with a Focus on Water Quality	Foundation Trust University of Otago	340,000
01/02/2020	Coronavirus modelling	Ministry of Health	100,000
01/01/2020	The Impact of Sepsis in Aotearoa New Zealand	Medical Research Institute of New Zealand	111,000
01/07/2019	CRAG - Epidemiological and public health research on infectious disease and child health	University of Otago	75,741
01/10/2018	Developing an optimal strategy for the rheumatic fever endgame	Health Research Council of NZ (HRC)	1,196,974
01/09/2018	Emerging Sources and Pathways for Leptospirosis - a paradigm shift	Massey University	38,328
01/01/2018	A novel method to identify and reduce infectious disease risk factors for Tongan children	University of Otago	47,307
01/11/2016	Understanding GAS pharyngitis and skin infections as causes of rheumatic fever	Health Research Council of NZ (HRC)	1,197,694
01/11/2016	Travel to Emerging Infectious Diseases and Surveillance meeting 2016	National Heart Foundation of NZ	2,000
10/03/2015	Sore throats MOH RFP	Institute of Environmental Science and Research Limited (ESR)	120,000
01/01/2015	Could improving homes prevent	New Zealand Lottery	120,000

<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Contracting Body</b>	<b>Total</b>
	children developing GAS pharyngitis and rheumatic fever	Grants Board	
01/01/2015	Understanding and preventing recurrent paediatric admissions in New Zealand	University of Otago	41,747
01/12/2014	Is the family pet a risk factor for multidrug resistant bacterial infections?	Massey University	40,715
01/11/2013	Identifying risk factors for rheumatic fever in New Zealand	Health Research Council of NZ (HRC)	799,362
01/02/2013	Rheumatic fever: Improving surveillance in New Zealand	Ministry of Health	10,000
08/05/2012	Rheumatic fever: Improving surveillance in New Zealand	Ministry of Health	38,729
24/04/2012	Research on the health trends of Housing NZ applicants and tenants	Housing New Zealand Corporation	26,087
01/01/2012	Are infectious diseases killing us?"	University of Otago	32,820