

MEDIA RELEASE

OPC wins international award for MSD fraud investigation report

24 October 2019

The Office of the Privacy Commissioner (OPC) has won an international award for its inquiry and report into the Ministry of Social Development's (MSD) misuse of its fraud investigatory powers.

The OPC entry was voted the best in the Dispute Resolution and Enforcement Category of the Global Privacy and Data Protection Awards 2019. The entries are voted on by members of the International Conference of Data Protection and Privacy Authorities (ICDPPC). The [ICDPPC](#), which consists of 122 privacy authorities from around the world, has just concluded its annual meeting in Tirana, Albania.

Privacy Commissioner John Edwards says his office is honoured to receive this recognition from international privacy protection peers, especially given the quality and number of other entries.

“We are proud to have successfully advocated for the privacy rights of vulnerable members of New Zealand society. The inquiry and subsequent report show that personal information is about people.

“Misusing that information can cause measurable harm – especially to individuals who depend on the welfare system to support themselves and their families. These people are entitled to fairness in the system.”

Mr Edwards acknowledged the cooperation of MSD and its commitment to fixing the wrongs identified by his office's inquiry and report.

The inquiry found MSD's exercise of its information gathering powers to be inconsistent with legal requirements under the Social Security Act 1964 and the Privacy Act 1993. This failure resulted in infringements of individual privacy, particularly in relation to the collection of information from third parties.

More information – including the report - about the *Privacy Commissioner's Inquiry into the Ministry of Social Development's Exercise of Section 11 (Social Security Act 1964) and Compliance with the Code of Conduct* can [be found here](#).

ENDS

For further information, contact Charles Mabbett 021 509 735.