



1 MAY 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

On 2 April 2018 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *How many Māori people currently hold Community Services Cards?*
- *How many Māori people currently receive the Accommodation Supplement?*
- *How many Pacific people currently hold Community Services Cards?*
- *How many Pacific people currently receive the Accommodation Supplement?*
- *How many people living in NZ Deprivation Index quintile 5 hold Community Services Cards?*
- *How many people living in NZ Deprivation Index quintile 5 receive the Accommodation Supplement?*

The Community Services Card is available to all New Zealanders over the age of 16 on a low to middle income. The card can be used to reduce the costs of a range of fees associated with healthcare, and is administered on behalf of the Ministry of Health.

Please refer to the below table which shows the number of current Community Services Cards issued, and the number of individuals in receipt of an Accommodation Supplement, by ethnicity, as at the end of December 2017.

Ethnicity	Community Services Cards Issued	Accommodation Supplement recipients
Māori	170,416	88,781
Pacific peoples	50,054	19,400
Other	505,392	173,790
Unspecified	133,478	9,663
Total	859,340	291,634

Notes:

- Please note that this is a count of cards on issue. An individual may have multiple cards issued to them, for example, on behalf of dependant children.

- Ethnicity data is self-identified and multiple ethnicities may be chosen by an individual as fits their preference or self-concept. Multiple ethnicities are then prioritised into a hierarchy. The Māori ethnicity has the highest priority in this hierarchy, followed by Pacific peoples. New Zealand European has the lowest priority. This is to ensure that smaller and politically significant ethnic groups do not get overwhelmed by the larger ethnic groups. A single ethnicity is assigned to an individual based on this hierarchy.
- Ethnic groups do not currently align with Statistics New Zealand ethnicity groupings.

Please note that clients are not required to provide information regarding ethnicity in order to receive a Community Services Card or the Accommodation Supplement. Cards may also be issued on behalf of dependent children whose ethnicity is often not recorded.

More information regarding Community Services Cards and the Accommodation Supplement can be found on the Work and Income website here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/community-services-card.html and here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/accommodation-supplement.html.

The New Zealand Deprivation Index is a University of Otago construct and this data is not collected by the Ministry. In order to match this data with the Ministry's data regarding Community Services Cardholders and Accommodation Supplement recipients, the Ministry would need to divert personnel from their core duties and allocate extra time to complete this task. The diversion of these resources would impair the Ministry's ability to continue standard operations and would be an inefficient use of the Ministry's resources. As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act, requires substantial collation. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

The Ministry has considered whether this information could be provided given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. In either case, however, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

You may also be interested in the Benefit Fact Sheets, which contain a range of data regarding financial support offered by the Ministry, and the clients receiving this support. The Benefit Fact Sheets are published on the Ministry's website here: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/benefit.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider public shortly. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social

Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding Community Services Cardholders and Accommodation Supplement recipients, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'EB', is positioned below the text 'Yours sincerely'.

Elisabeth Brunt
General Manager, Ministerial and Executive Services