



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

- 5 SEP 2016



Dear

On 30 June 2016 you wrote to the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *How many applications for housing assistance have been made in Motueka since WINZ became responsible for processing these?*
- *In numerical terms, what have been the outcomes? (how many were rated at what level of urgency, how many failed to meet the criteria)?*
- *How many applications have resulted in being provided accommodation?*
- *What specific criteria are applied in assessing applications?*
- *What is the level of Housing Supplement payable in WINZ Motueka District and on what basis is it determined?*
- *What is the expenditure on Housing Supplements paid to beneficiaries living in Motueka & District and how many have been paid each in the last three years?*

As you are aware, the Ministry took over responsibility for applications for social housing from Housing New Zealand on 14 April 2014. As a result, there are variances in the type of information reported by the two agencies. Prior to April 2014, social housing waitlist data was reported on a monthly basis whereas post April 2014, social housing waitlist data is reported on a quarterly basis. More information about the changes to social housing can be accessed on the Ministry's website at:

<http://housing.msd.govt.nz/forms/factsheets/social-housing-changes.html>

The length of time applicants may wait for housing will depend on:

- how quickly a suitable house becomes available;
- what the client's needs are;
- the number of people waiting with urgent needs.

Eligible applications are included in the Social Housing Register, which tracks the number of eligible applications for social housing properties or transfers between social housing properties at a given point in time. The number of applications on the register and their priority rating is subject to change, as people come on and off the register and as their circumstances change. Please note that the Social Housing Register reports on the number of applications and may represent an individual or a household.

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The Social Housing Register is published on a quarterly basis. Register numbers are reported by register type, priority (A and B), region (territorial authority, or local board for Auckland), and household demographics. Quarterly information can be found on the Ministry's Social Housing website at:

[www.housing.msdc.govt.nz/information-for-housing-providers/register/index.html](http://www.housing.msdc.govt.nz/information-for-housing-providers/register/index.html)

[www.housing.msdc.govt.nz/information-for-housing-providers/register/archive/archive.html](http://www.housing.msdc.govt.nz/information-for-housing-providers/register/archive/archive.html)

- *How many applications for housing assistance have been made in Motueka since WINZ became responsible for processing these?*
- *In numerical terms, what have been the outcomes? (how many were rated at what level of urgency, how many failed to meet the criteria)?*

The Ministry is unable to provide the number of people who applied for or had their application for housing assistance declined in Motueka, since the Ministry became responsible for Social Housing as this information is held on individual files. The Social Housing Register provides the number of eligible applicants ready to be matched to a suitable property, not the number of people who have applied or been declined. As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act as substantial manual collation would be required to provide this information.

In order to provide you with this information Ministry staff would have to manually review a large number of files. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service. I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

- *How many applications have resulted in being provided accommodation?*

In August 2015 the Ministry implemented a new Information Technology system for recording social housing data. As such, the way housing information is reported prior to September 2015 differs to the way this information is reported now. Prior to September 2015 the Ministry recorded placed tenancies as the "number of applications that accepted an offer" by Community Link (Work and Income site). This information is now reported as the "number of applications that activated a tenancy" by Territorial Local Authority.

I am unable to provide you with the number of priority A and B applications that accepted an offer of housing in the Motueka Community Link office by quarters, ending September 2014 to June 2015, as there are fewer than six applications in each quarter, and releasing this information is likely to risk identifying the individuals concerned. As such, this information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information. There were no applications that accepted an offer of housing in the June 2014 quarter.

The table below provides the number of priority A and B applications that activated a tenancy in the Tasman District Territorial Local Authority by quarter, ending June

2016. Please note, that 'S' represents a suppressed cell to protect client privacy. Please also note that the Tasman District Territorial Local Authority includes Motueka and Richmond. It is not possible to produce data for the September 2015 quarter due to the August Information Technology implementation and migration of data.

| Quarter       | Number of applications that activated a tenancy |
|---------------|---|
| December 2015 | S   |
| March 2016    | 6   |
| June 2016     | S   |

**Notes**

The A and B priority applications used in these tables are as at the end of the reporting period or the time of accepting an offer of social housing, the application priority may have changed prior to or after this date.

Territorial Local Authority (TLA) is based on the tenancy address. TLA is defined under the Local Government Act 2002 as a city council or district council.

Ungeocoded tenancy address records that are unable to be matched to a TLA through suburb and city details have an unknown TLA and are not included in this report.

- *What specific criteria are applied in assessing applications?*

Information about eligibility for social housing and the criteria used in assessing applications is available on Work and Income's Manuals and Procedures website at:

[www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/qualifications.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/qualifications.html)

- *What is the level of Housing Supplement payable in WINZ Motueka District and on what basis is it determined?*
- *What is the expenditure on Housing Supplements paid to beneficiaries living in Motueka & District and how many have been paid each in the last three years?*

The Accommodation Supplement is a non-taxable benefit that provides assistance towards accommodation costs. It is available for people who rent, board or own their own home and a person does not have to be receiving a benefit to qualify. It is calculated using a formula that takes into account the geographical location, family size, accommodation costs, income and tenure type (renting, boarding or home ownership).

Please note, a person who is living in a property owned or managed by a social housing provider cannot receive Accommodation Supplement. However a person paying rent to a registered community housing provider for a property that is not contracted for Income Related Rent purposes may be eligible to receive this assistance.

Further information about the Accommodation Supplement, including the eligibility criteria and maximum payable rates, is available on Work and Income's Manuals and Procedures website at:

[www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/accommodation-supplement/index.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/accommodation-supplement/index.html)

<http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/accommodation-supplement/social-housing-tenants-01.html>

The table below shows the number, weekly amount and average amount of the Accommodation Supplement paid to clients at the Motueka and Richmond Work and Income sites, as at the end of June for the years 2013 to 2016. Please note, information relating to the Richmond site has also been provided as it is part of the Tasman District Territorial Local Authority. The average weekly Accommodation Supplement is calculated based on number of clients and the total amount received by those clients as at the end of June each year. This data changes weekly as client's circumstances change.

| Quarter Ending | Motueka               |                   |                     | Richmond              |                   |                     |
|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
|                | Number of Supplements | Total Weekly Rate | Average Weekly Rate | Number of Supplements | Total Weekly Rate | Average Weekly Rate |
| June 2013      | 975                   | \$57,681          | \$59                | 1,476                 | \$133,564         | \$90                |
| June 2014      | 958                   | \$56,955          | \$59                | 1,459                 | \$133,321         | \$91                |
| June 2015      | 1,186                 | \$67,290          | \$57                | 1,607                 | \$147,795         | \$92                |
| June 2016      | 1,274                 | \$73,025          | \$57                | 1,750                 | \$159,654         | \$91                |

I hope you find this information about Social Housing and the Accommodation Supplement helpful. You have the right to seek an investigation and review of my response by the Ombudsman, whose address for contact purposes is:

The Ombudsman  
Office of the Ombudsman  
PO Box 10-152  
WELLINGTON 6143

Yours sincerely



 Nic Blakeley  
**Deputy Chief Executive, Social Housing**