



19 SEP 2016



Dear

On 20 July 2016 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *The number of tenants the Ministry has referred to 'Debbie' Widharni Iskandar.*
- *The number of bonds the Ministry has paid to 'Debbie' Widharni Iskandar.*
- *The number of tenants the Ministry has assisted with rent payments who were renting from 'Debbie' Widharni Iskandar.*
- *The Ministry's list or lists of approved landlords for tenants with housing needs as mentioned on Checkpoint on 20 July 2016.*
- *The number of approved landlords the Ministry has currently and for each of the last two financial years broken down by region and in total.*
- *The number of tenants the Ministry has referred to their approved landlords for each of the last two financial years and in the current financial year to date broken down by region and in total.*
- *The number of tenants the Ministry has paid the bond for to an approved landlord for each of the last two financial years and in the current financial year to date broken down by region and in total.*
- *The number of investigations the Ministry has carried out into the quality of housing by their approved landlords for each of the last two financial years and in the current financial year to date.*
- *The number of approved landlords taken off the Ministry's list for each of the last two financial years and in the current financial year to date broken down by reason and in total.*
- *The number of complaints that the Ministry has received about any landlord who is or was on their approved landlords list for each of the last two financial years and in the current financial year to date.*

Work and Income's registered supplier process for landlords does not include the vetting of accommodation, rather it allows Work and Income to make payments to the landlord on behalf of clients. Individuals are responsible for their own, informed, decisions before entering into a tenancy agreement, and any concerns around legality of dwellings should be directed to the local council.

Following concerns raised about Ms Iskandar, people seeking accommodation have not been directed to this supplier by Work and Income for over six months.

The Ministry does not have a centralised record of the number of tenants directed to Ms Iskandar. To provide this information would require the Ministry to review thousands of individual files and as such, this request is refused under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. 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.

Not all Work and Income clients in properties managed by Ms Iskandar were directed there by Work and Income, and not all people in these properties are Work and Income clients. People may have found this accommodation through other means, and subsequently sought Work and Income assistance to move there. The Ministry does not vet accommodation for suitability, as clients are responsible for ensuring that their accommodation is appropriate.

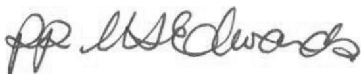
I can advise that Ms Iskandar received nine accommodation related (for example for bonds and rent arrears) hardship payments in the 2012/13 financial year, 24 in the 2013/14 financial year, 285 in the 2014/15 financial year and 364 in the 2015/16 financial year. Please note that this is a count of grants, and not tenants. Please note that it is not uncommon for the Ministry to provide hardship payments to a variety of property managers, who in some circumstances may be receiving a high number of payments.

The Ministry does not approve landlords and as such your requests for information regarding "approved landlords" is refused under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information does not exist. The Ministry does not manage tenancies between private landlords and tenants, and as such have no ability or authority to follow up on concerns around condition/legality of the property or landlord conduct.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact [OIA\\_Requests@msd.govt.nz](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Ruth Bound  
**Deputy Chief Executive, Service Delivery**