



29 AUG 2018



Dear 

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

- *How many applications for OSCAR subsidies for school holiday programmes WINZ has received every year and how many are approved, broken down by year for the last four years (2014-2017) and broken down by region;*
- *How much OSCAR subsidies for school holiday programmes have cost WINZ each year during the last four years (2014-2017) broken down by year and broken down by region;*
- *How many applications for OSCAR subsidies for school holiday programmes has WINZ received so far this year and how many have been approved, broken down by region?*

On 12 July 2018, you were notified that the Ministry cannot distinguish OSCAR subsidies for school holidays from other periods of the year. To determine this, Ministry staff would have to review thousands of individual case notes. As such, your request was refined to:

- *Total number of applications for OSCAR subsidies broken down by child for the last four years (2014-2017).*
- *Total number of applications for OSCAR subsidies broken down by child so far this year.*

The Ministry of Social Development, through Work and Income, provides financial support for childcare and out of school care and is committed to supporting services in this sector. The Out of School Care and Recreation (OSCAR) Subsidy is a payment which helps families with the costs of before and after school care for up to 20 hours a week, and school holiday programmes for up to 50 hours a week.

Enclosed are two tables in response to your request:

- Table 1 shows the number of OSCAR subsidy applications granted or declined by calendar year during the period 1 January 2014 to 30 June 2018, broken down by region.
- Table 2 shows the number of children for whom an OSCAR subsidy was granted or declined by calendar year in the period 1 January 2014 to 30 June 2018, broken down by region.

Please note that in order to protect client privacy some values have been suppressed in accordance with section 9(2)(a) of the Act. The Ministry is unable to provide you with the exact number of OSCAR subsidy applications in every region, as the numbers for some regions are very low and releasing this information is likely to risk identifying the individuals concerned. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information.

The 'other' category consists of service centres that do not represent a geographic location such as call centres and online processing units. There has been an increase in clients using these services in recent years.

Your request for the amount paid in OSCAR subsidies is refused under section 18(f) of the Act, as the information is recorded in notes on individual case files and substantial manual collation would be required to provide this information. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service. However, you may be interested in the total expenditure amounts of Childcare Assistance from 2014 to 2017 which is provided in the table below. Childcare Assistance is a combination of the OSCAR Subsidy, Childcare Subsidy and Early Learning Payment.

Financial Year	Childcare Assistance (rounded to nearest thousand)
2013/14	\$185,596,000
2014/15	\$183,095,000
2015/16	\$182,138,000
2016/17	\$198,590,000

The Ministry is working to improve the client experience and strengthen the service culture to make engaging with us easier. This includes a simple to use online eligibility guide which allows the public to identify what assistance they may be eligible to receive. This should improve the take up of supplementary assistance, including OSCAR subsidies, for people that are applying for, receiving, or are exiting a main 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 and any attached documents 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 OSCAR subsidy applications, 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 black ink, appearing to read 'D Dickinson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dwina Dickinson
Group General Manager, Client Service Support

Table 1: Number of OSCAR subsidy applications granted and declined by calendar year from 1 January 2014 to 30 June 2018, broken down by Work and Income region.

Region	31 December 2014			31 December 2015			31 December 2016			31 December 2017			30 June 2018*		
	Decline	Grant	Applications	Decline	Grant	Applications	Decline	Grant	Applications	Decline	Grant	Applications	Decline	Grant	Applications
Northland	153	1,091	1,244	143	1,023	1,166	102	549	651	S	S	30	S	0	S
Auckland Metro	1,122	10,089	11,211	823	8,704	9,527	613	5,650	6,263	337	4,069	4,406	242	2,410	2,652
Waikato	229	3,409	3,638	244	2,682	2,926	166	1,580	1,746	17	63	80	S	S	12
Taranaki Bay of Plenty	87	1,128	1,215	85	812	897	81	553	634	S	S	S	S	0	S
East Coast	329	3,686	4,015	308	3,185	3,493	229	2,044	2,273	14	54	68	S	S	24
Central	242	3,049	3,291	255	2,601	2,856	170	1,103	1,273	8	36	44	S	S	10
Wellington	198	2,410	2,608	144	1,864	2,008	122	1,126	1,248	10	11	21	S	S	15
Nelson	251	2,855	3,106	196	2,035	2,231	148	1,285	1,433	24	58	82	S	S	12
Canterbury	134	1,453	1,587	87	1,123	1,210	105	563	668	0	S	S	0	0	0
Southern	414	3,098	3,512	300	2,266	2,566	187	1,186	1,373	27	76	103	S	S	S
Other	136	2,245	2,381	145	1,796	1,941	115	940	1,055	8	93	101	S	S	15
Total	179	1,464	1,643	206	4,915	5,121	503	9,527	10,030	1,729	20,076	21,805	890	9,366	10,256
Total	3,474	35,977	39,451	2,936	33,006	35,942	2,541	26,106	28,647	2,185	24,565	26,750	1,156	11,847	13,003

Notes:

- This is the number of applications granted or declined during a period.
- This is not a count of clients. A client may be counted more than once if granted or declined in the period.
- "S" represents numbers suppressed for client privacy.
- "Other" represents those service centres that do not represent a geographic location such as call centres and processing units.

* Columns ending 30 June 2018 are during the period 1 January 2018 to 30 June 2018.

Table 2: Number of children for whom an OSCAR subsidy was granted or declined by calendar year from 1 January 2014 to 30 June 2018, broken down by Work and Income region.

Region	31 December 2014		31 December 2015		31 December 2016		31 December 2017		30 June 2018*	
	Decline	Grant	Decline	Grant	Decline	Grant	Decline	Grant	Decline	Grant
Northland	147	732	127	726	97	433	8	18	S	0
Auckland Metro	1,022	6,476	785	6,115	564	4,053	317	2,910	231	1,929
Waikato	215	2,041	232	1,839	155	1,162	17	45	S	S
Taranaki	85	837	82	660	79	490	S	S	S	0
Bay of Plenty	311	2,648	289	2,452	212	1,594	13	42	S	9
East Coast	232	1,996	233	1,869	163	894	8	28	S	8
Central	194	1,796	135	1,523	117	966	10	6	S	12
Wellington	235	1,835	188	1,513	140	967	24	41	S	7
Nelson	127	988	81	826	96	460	0	S	0	0
Canterbury	381	2,121	283	1,704	176	920	26	60	S	S
Southern	128	1,514	137	1,279	109	716	S	63	S	11
Other	166	1,039	188	2,579	470	6,192	1,619	14,785	862	7,541
Total	3,243	24,023	2,760	23,085	2,378	18,847	2,053	18,005	1,117	9,525

Notes:

- This is the number of children who had an OSCAR subsidy granted or declined.
- This is not a count of clients. A client may be counted more than once if they had multiple children with a subsidy granted or declined in the period.
- Children can be counted at most twice in a year if they had a decline and grant in a year.
- If multiple declines exist for a child in a year they will only be counted as one decline.
- If multiple grants exist for a child in a year they will only be counted as one grant.
- "S" represents numbers suppressed for client privacy.
- "Other" represents those service centres that do not represent a geographic location such as call centres and processing units.

*Columns ending 30 June 2018 are during the period 1 January 2018 to 30 June 2018.