



13 AUG 2019

Dear [REDACTED]

On 28 June 2019, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *How many clients stayed in Emergency Housing accommodation in South Waikato this year?*
- *How many of these clients have stayed in the Okoroire Hotel?*
- *What is the cost of Emergency Housing in South Waikato this year?*
- *How long are clients staying in Emergency Housing accommodation?*

The Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (EH SNG) funds temporary accommodation at places such as hostels, hotels, or motels to meet people's immediate housing needs. This grant is paid to help meet the cost of short-term accommodation where no Transitional Housing is available. We acknowledge that such temporary accommodation is not a long-term solution, particularly for vulnerable people with complex needs, but they provide a short-term solution while more sustainable options are progressed.

The Ministry pays EH SNGs directly to the accommodation supplier. This grant is available to people who cannot remain in their usual place of residence, if any, and do not have access to other accommodation which is adequate for them or their family's needs. Assistance is generally granted for up to seven nights but can be extended dependent on individual circumstances. In most cases, this does not need to be paid back, though this will depend on a household's circumstances.

As the housing shortage continues, we are supporting a number of people with emergency accommodation. We encourage people to talk to us, so we can see how we might be able to help them.

South Waikato is located between the cities of Hamilton to the north, Rotorua to the east, Taupo to the south and Ruapehu District to the west. It includes three main towns: Tokoroa, Putaruru and Tirau. Is it important to note that accommodation used for EH SNGs are not geocoded and the Ministry has manually identified the accommodation used in these locations. As such, the reporting of the information below may not be able to be replicated for other areas.

There have been 132 EH SNGs granted for 39 clients to stay at emergency housing in South Waikato between 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019, at a total cost of \$144,793. These grants were paid to cover 829 nights over this period. The total amount granted, however, may not be the same as the actual amount spent. Clients may leave emergency housing accommodation early (or not stay at all), which can lead to a refund.

I can advise you that of the 39 clients who received EH SNGs for South Waikato emergency housing, fewer than six clients had EH SNGs paid to Okoroire Hotel between 1 July 2018 and 30 June 2019. In order to protect client privacy, the Ministry is unable to provide you with the exact number as 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.

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](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response, 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Cassandra Wise  
**Manager Issues Resolution, Service Delivery**