



29 AUG 2019

Dear [REDACTED]

On 1 August 2019 you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *How many people have received the International Custody Dispute Payment in the last 10 years?*
- *How much did each of these recipients receive?*

The International Custody Dispute Payment is a non-recoverable payment paid under the Special Needs Grant (SNG) Welfare Programme. It is paid to a parent who is awaiting the outcome of an international custody dispute, has no other means of support (such as work, support from their government or family, or other support from New Zealand) and is facing financial hardship.

The maximum rate payable is equivalent to the rate of Sole Parent Support plus the appropriate rate of Accommodation Supplement. The amount of payment is dependent on the client's personal financial circumstances. Influential factors include clients' income and accommodation costs. Payment rates for a given client, therefore, could change throughout the course of receiving this assistance.

More information on the International Custody Dispute Payment can be found at the following link: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/international-custody-dispute-payment-01.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/international-custody-dispute-payment-01.html).

Over the last ten financial years (1 July 2009 to 30 June 2019) there have been 21 people who have received the International Custody Dispute Payment.

In order to provide the total amount granted to each recipient, Ministry staff would have to identify each client's weekly payment history and manually calculate the total amount granted, taking into account any payment rate changes over time. This is because, unlike many other SNGs, the International Custody Dispute Payment is an ongoing payment, made weekly, that can change depending on the client's circumstances.

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. We can, however, provide other figures that can be of assistance.

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.

While I am not able to provide the total amount granted to each client, you may be interested to know that the average International Custody Dispute Payment rate during the last ten financial years was \$261.01 per week (at the date of grant).

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



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