



27 FEB 2019



On 29 January 2019, the Ministry received your email requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, information regarding Funeral Grants.

The Ministry provides Funeral Grants to help those who have no other means to meet the costs of a funeral. A Funeral Grant assists people with actual and reasonable funeral costs and is not designed to cover all funeral expenses. It is income and asset tested and eligibility takes into consideration whether the deceased person has a surviving partner or dependent child or if the deceased is a child.

Expenses that can be met through a Funeral Grant include:

- professional services with regard to preparing the body for cremation or burial (for example, embalming)
- cost of a casket
- newspaper notice costs
- hearse fees
- compulsory fees for the purchase of a burial plot
- cremation fees

Further information on the eligibility criteria for a Funeral Grant can be found on Work and Income's website: www.workandincome.govt.nz/individuals/a-z-benefits/funeral-grant.html.

For the sake of clarity I will respond to each of your questions in turn:

- 1 *The number of funeral grants made each year over the last 10 (or 5?) years?*
- 3 *The total amount paid out each year in funeral grants*

Please refer to Table One which provides the number of Funeral Grants granted between the quarter ending 31 March 2009 and the quarter ending 31 December 2018, and the total and average amount granted broken down by quarter.

- 2 *The maximum amount able to be claimed in those years (i.e. I would like to see how that has changed from year-to-year)*

Please find attached Table Two outlining the maximum Funeral Grant rate as at 1 April from 2009 to 2018. The Grant is adjusted as part of the Annual General Adjustment which makes sure that main benefits and some other types of assistance continue to rise with the cost of living, using the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

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 Funeral Grants, 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



Cassandra Wise
Manager, Issue Resolution, Service Delivery

Table One: Numbers of Funeral Grants granted between the quarter ending 31 March 2009 and the quarter ending 31 December 2018 and the total and average amount granted, broken down by quarter.

Quarter	Number	Sum of payments	Mean payment amount
Mar-2009	1,230	\$1,998,060.57	\$1,624.44
Jun-2009	1,332	\$2,206,183.20	\$1,656.29
Sep-2009	1,566	\$2,641,188.21	\$1,686.58
Dec-2009	1,430	\$2,406,187.79	\$1,682.65
Mar-2010	1,234	\$2,097,902.57	\$1,700.08
Jun-2010	1,306	\$2,243,136.58	\$1,717.56
Sep-2010	1,484	\$2,560,780.30	\$1,725.59
Dec-2010	1,354	\$2,318,393.68	\$1,712.26
Mar-2011	1,268	\$2,179,822.64	\$1,719.10
Jun-2011	1,299	\$2,336,790.41	\$1,798.91
Sep-2011	1,484	\$2,662,654.37	\$1,794.24
Dec-2011	1,461	\$2,621,525.86	\$1,794.34
Mar-2012	1,229	\$2,217,305.69	\$1,804.15
Jun-2012	1,330	\$2,418,564.16	\$1,818.47
Sep-2012	1,445	\$2,620,565.53	\$1,813.54
Dec-2012	1,421	\$2,614,640.15	\$1,840.00
Mar-2013	1,140	\$2,076,487.69	\$1,821.48
Jun-2013	1,195	\$2,185,195.10	\$1,828.62
Sep-2013	1,294	\$2,385,401.34	\$1,843.43
Dec-2013	1,350	\$2,442,678.77	\$1,809.39
Mar-2014	1,141	\$2,062,024.21	\$1,807.21
Jun-2014	1,104	\$2,033,554.63	\$1,841.99
Sep-2014	1,435	\$2,659,067.55	\$1,853.01
Dec-2014	1,236	\$2,283,431.49	\$1,847.44
Mar-2015	1,091	\$2,002,204.18	\$1,835.20
Jun-2015	1,156	\$2,150,846.89	\$1,860.59
Sep-2015	1,334	\$2,488,588.39	\$1,865.51
Dec-2015	1,234	\$2,294,532.21	\$1,859.43
Mar-2016	953	\$1,758,545.61	\$1,845.27
Jun-2016	1,163	\$2,182,818.63	\$1,876.89
Sep-2016	1,245	\$2,296,204.74	\$1,844.34
Dec-2016	1,103	\$2,061,470.71	\$1,868.97
Mar-2017	1,060	\$1,994,197.11	\$1,881.32
Jun-2017	1,182	\$2,200,664.61	\$1,861.81
Sep-2017	1,406	\$2,608,653.02	\$1,855.37
Dec-2017	1,302	\$2,440,766.33	\$1,874.63
Mar-2018	1,100	\$2,086,024.79	\$1,896.39
Jun-2018	1,127	\$2,140,649.22	\$1,899.42
Sep-2018	1,219	\$2,328,447.44	\$1,910.13
Dec-2018	1,346	\$2,554,444.76	\$1,897.80

Note:

- This is a table of grants not clients. The same client may have received more than one grant during this period.

Table Two: Maximum Funeral Grant rate as at 1 April from 2009 to 2018, broken down by year

Year	Maximum Funeral Grant rate
1 April 2009	\$1820.08
1 April 2010	\$1855.75
1 April 2011	\$1925.34
1 April 2012	\$1959.42
1 April 2013	\$1971.37
1 April 2014	\$1998.57
1 April 2015	\$2008.76
1 April 2016	\$2008.76
1 April 2017	\$2030.91
1 April 2018	\$2058.52

Note:

- The maximum Funeral Grant rate is adjusted annually as part of the Annual General Adjustment in line with the Consumer Price Index.
- In 2016 the Funeral Grant rate was maintained at the previous level as the rate of inflation was negative (-0.25 per cent) in 2015.