



01 OCT 2020

Tēnā koe

On 4 September 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information in relation to emergency housing in the Wairarapa since March 2020:

- 1. How many people is this housing actually for i.e. the number of people housed?*
- 2. Masterton need has gone up quite significantly i.e. by over a hundred applications approved. Again, how many people is this for?*
- 3. In the June quarter for Wairarapa which is: Carterton, South Wairarapa and Masterton, how many people have stayed more than the 7 days in EH and what has been the longest stay?*

As you are aware, there has been a growing demand nationally for emergency housing as the shortage of affordable housing and rising rents continues to impact low-income whānau, particularly those who are beneficiaries.

The year 2020 has seen a significant increase in demand for emergency housing, as the Ministry supported people through the COVID-19 pandemic period with accommodation in which they could safely self-isolate.

The Ministry recognises that motels are not a long-term solution, particularly for vulnerable people with complex needs. The need to provide EH SNGs is, in addition to the shortage of affordable housing, a reflection of the Government's commitment to ensuring that those in need have somewhere to stay, so they are not sleeping in their cars or outside. They provide a short-term solution while more sustainable options are progressed.

You can access more general information about the Ministry's housing and support services, including EH SNGs on the Ministry's website available at: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/social-housing/index.html.

Please see **Table One** provided overleaf in response to questions one and two of your request.

Table One: Total number and amount of EH SNGs granted, and the number of distinct clients in Carterton, Masterton, and South Wairarapa Territorial Local Authorities (TLAs) for the six-month period 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2020

TLA	1 January 2020 to 30 June 2020		
	Total grants	Distinct clients	Amount granted
Carterton district	18	9	\$21,566
Masterton district	587	131	\$1,006,435
South Wairarapa district	24	13	\$28,082
Total	629	144	\$1,056,083

Notes:

- This report only contains clients with a recorded residential address within Territorial Local Authorities in Wairarapa.
- This contains counts of grants and distinct clients.
- One client may have more than one EH SNG.
- TLA is estimated based on the clients' address at the time of the grant. It may not be the same as the address of the emergency housing provider.
- Ungeocoded address records that are unable to be matched to a TLA are not included, as they may be represented in multiple TLAs if regularly changing their address.
- Distinct clients should not be summed up across TLAs as they may be represented in multiple TLAs if regularly changing their address.
- The amount granted may not be the amount spent.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting Alert Level 4 nation-wide lockdown, the Ministry extended Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (EH SNG) timeframes from 7 days to a maximum of 21 days, as clients were unable to move into other accommodation which was adequate for them and their families' needs during this time.

The high increase in the amount granted for EH SNGs in the June 2020 quarter, compared with previous quarters, is directly associated with the COVID-19 lock-down period. In accordance with the Ministry of Health guidelines, the Ministry paused non-essential placement activity, meaning that people could not move out of emergency housing into sustainable accommodation, either to transitional or public housing or private accommodation, during COVID-19 Alert Level 4.

This pattern can also be seen in the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) June 2020 Quarterly Housing Report where the number of Transitional Housing places for the June 2020 quarter matched that of the March 2020 quarter at 114 places for the Central Region. Together, these measures resulted in longer durations of stay, and higher costs. The June 2020 Quarterly Housing Report is available at the following link: www.hud.govt.nz/assets/Community-and-Public-Housing/Follow-our-progress/Quarterly-Reports-2020/Housing-Quarterly-Report-June-2020.pdf.

Changes in the number of grants granted by particular sites in the June 2020 quarter reflects operational changes introduced by the Ministry to manage increased demand over the COVID-19 lockdown period. In addition to extending the timeframe for EH SNGs, this saw the Ministry make greater use of phone-based and online services and means that clients in a region may have received a grant from any of their region's offices regardless of their physical location.

Additionally, the COVID-19 lockdown period saw the Ministry support additional client cohorts, including people who were unable to remain in their usual place of residence after receiving a Police Safety Order.

Combined, these factors contributed to longer durations of stay, and higher costs.

For further context regarding the number of people 'actually housed' in the June 2020 quarter, please see **Table Two** below.

Table Two: Number of distinct clients receiving EH SNG in Carterton, Masterton, and South Wairarapa TLAs as at the end of June 2020, broken down by household composition of recipients

TLA	As at 30 June 2020					Total
	Couple with no children	Couple with Children	Single with no Children	Single with Children	Unknown	
Carterton district	0	S	S	S	0	7
Masterton district	11	S	53	27	S	98
South Wairarapa district	0	0	S	S	0	10

Notes:

- Household composition is the size of people staying in the motel and may not be reflective of the actual family size.
- Household size can only be reported from April 2020.
- Household size is based on the last EH SNG granted to the client within the TLA for the June quarter.
- If a client was granted EH SNGs across multiple TLAs, their household size will be reported as at the last grant in each of the TLAs for the quarter.
- The household composition may have differed before this grant.
- This data is as at a point in time and therefore does not correspond with the totals in Table One.

Please see **Table Three** in response to question three of your request, provided overleaf.

Table Three: Number of EH SNGs granted in Carterton, Masterton, and South Wairarapa TLAs as at the end of June 2020, broken down by number of nights funded for a distinct client in the quarter

TLA	As at 30 June 2020					Total
	7 nights or less	8-14 nights	15-30 nights	31-60 nights	61+ nights	
Carterton district	S	S	S	0	0	7
Masterton district	16	6	23	26	27	98
South Wairarapa district	S	S	S	S	S	10

Notes:

- Numbers of nights is based on the last EH SNG granted in the quarter in each TLA
- If a client was granted EH SNGs across multiple TLAs, their number of nights will be reported as at the last grant in each of the TLAs for the quarter.
- The number of nights granted is not necessarily the number of nights the client stayed in emergency housing.
- This data is as at a point in time and therefore does not correspond with the totals in Table One.

Please note, in order to protect client privacy, some values in tables two and three are suppressed and are represented by 'S'. 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.

In the interest of being helpful, and to assist you with your analysis, I refer you to the excel spreadsheet attached which provides the Ministry's standard quarterly reporting showing the total number and amount of EH SNGs granted, and the number of distinct clients in Carterton, Masterton, and South Wairarapa TLAs as at the end of each quarter from March 2019 to June 2020.

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. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter and attachments 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 emergency housing in the Wairarapa, 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.

Ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Hocking', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Karen Hocking
General Manager
Housing