



06 OCT 2020

Tēnā koe

On 8 September 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

1. *Do you have any emergency type housing in Kaiti? If so:*
 - a. *How many (please differentiate if they are motels, units or homes)?*
 - b. *How many people will it accommodate?*
 - c. *What is the average charge per week?*
2. *Do you have a waiting list for housing in the Kaiti area? If so:*
 - a. *How many?*
 - b. *Of those, how many are identified as:*
 - i. *Māori?*
 - ii. *Single parents?*
 - iii. *Single income families?*
 - c. *What is the average wait period for housing?*
3. *Do you have a representative dealing specifically with housing in the Kaiti area? If so:*
 - a. *Who is it?*
 - b. *Where are they based?*
 - c. *What is their contact phone number?*

In order to provide context to this response, please reference the following background information below about emergency housing, transitional housing and public housing in New Zealand.

Emergency Housing

The Ministry understands that demand for housing across New Zealand is growing and more people are experiencing a severe and immediate need. This demand is generated by a shortage of affordable housing driving house price and rent growth. People on low incomes are most affected by rising housing costs and many seek financial help through the Ministry.

People with an immediate and urgent need of accommodation can contact MSD for assistance. The Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (EH SNG) is available to people who cannot remain in their usual place or 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.

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The Ministry recognises that motels are not a long-term solution or the solution that the Ministry wants to deliver for people who are potentially in a vulnerable situation. They provide a short-term solution while more sustainable options are progressed.

Some people may struggle to access suitable housing due to a lack of available supply or they simply may not be able to meet the high cost of housing which may result in them receiving EH SNG support for an extended period of time.

Transitional Housing

In certain situations, the Ministry will refer people to a Transitional Housing provider as and when this option is available. These providers can offer short term accommodation and support for individuals and families. Transitional Housing services are contracted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development. More information about Transitional Housing is available at www.hud.govt.nz/community-and-public-housing/increasing-public-housing/transitional-housing/.

Public Housing

When New Zealanders are in need of public housing, their needs are recorded on either the Housing Register or the Transfer Register. The combined register is referred to as the Public Housing Register. The Housing Register shows people who are not currently in public housing but who have been assessed as eligible for public housing. The Transfer Register shows people already in public housing but who have applied to be rehoused. While the Ministry completes the housing assessments which inform the Public Housing Register, responsibility for funding and supply sits with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and Kāinga Ora, respectively. More information about the Housing Register is available here: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/housing/index.html.

Each housing application is given a priority rating based on the Ministry's assessment of housing need, and all applications are measured against the same criteria to determine that priority rating. Applicants who are assessed as at risk (Priority A) or as having a serious housing need (Priority B) are placed on the Register until a house becomes available. The Ministry's role is to assess people's needs for public housing and if they or a family member need an accessible home, we capture that as part of the assessment process. Clients who are on the Register are referred to Public Housing providers when suitable properties become available.

Clients who approach the Ministry seeking public housing are offered other assistance appropriate to their situation. These options include, for example, an Accommodation Supplement for private renters, or a Recoverable Assistance Payment Grant. Further information regarding available support can be accessed on the Ministry's website here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/living-expenses/housing.html.

For clarity, your questions are answered below in turn:

1. *Do you have any emergency type housing in Kaiti?*
 - a. *How many (please differentiate if they are motels, units or homes)?*
 - b. *How many people will it accommodate?*
 - c. *What is the average charge per week?*

The Ministry does not directly own, contract or provide emergency housing. The Ministry grants EH SNGs for commercial accommodation suppliers to provide temporary accommodation to clients. The Ministry holds data regarding the suppliers paid, however, this may not be recorded at the same address as where the accommodation is located.

The Ministry is unable to provide you with the number of clients that emergency housing could accommodate, as this is sourced on an as-needed basis through commercial accommodation suppliers and are not contracted or reserved spaces.

Additionally, the Ministry is unable to provide specific information for EH SNGs in Kaiti, as data is only reported down to a Territorial Local Authority (TLA) area.

Therefore, your request for the number of emergency housing suppliers in Kaiti, how many people it accommodates, and the average rate per week is refused under section 18(g) of the Official Information Act as the information you have requested is not held by the Ministry. I have no grounds to believe that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation.

In order to meet the intent of your request, the Ministry is providing you with information pulled from the Gisborne District Territorial Local Authority (TLA). TLA is the most accurate and specific breakdown that the Ministry can provide.

Please find the following table attached in **Appendix One** which outlines the number of EH SNGs granted to distinct clients and how much was granted in the Gisborne TLA, as at 30 June 2020:

- **Table One:** The number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants granted, and total amount granted in the Gisborne District Territorial Local Authority, for the quarter ending 30 June 2020, broken down by accommodation type
2. *Do you have a waiting list for housing in the Kaiti area? If so:*
- a) *How many?*
 - b) *Of those, how many are identified as:*
 - i. *Māori?*
 - ii. *Single parents?*
 - iii. *Single income families?*
 - c) *What is the average wait period for housing?*

The Ministry is unable to provide you with the number of clients on the Public Housing Register in the Kaiti area, because, as noted above, the Ministry only reports down to TLA.

I am unable to provide you with this information as any breakdown smaller than TLA is held in notes on individual case files. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files. As such, I refuse this part of your request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

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.

However, to meet the intent of your request, I can provide you with information about the Gisborne District TLA. There are currently 484 clients on the Housing Register and 58 on the Transfer Register. Please find the following two tables attached in **Appendix One** that provide an ethnicity and household type breakdown:

- **Table Two:** The number of clients on the Public Housing Register for the Gisborne District Territorial Local Authority as at 30 June 2020, broken down by prioritised ethnicity and register type
- **Table Three:** The number of clients on the Public Housing Register for the Gisborne District Territorial Local Authority as at 30 June 2020, broken down by prioritised household and register type

Please note, the ethnicity classification that is used to construct **Table Two** does not necessarily align with the current Statistics New Zealand classification of ethnicity. Ethnicity details recorded by the Ministry have been gathered under a variety of classification methods as clients come into contact with the Ministry. The ethnicity data may be self-identified based on an individual's preference or self-construct. While the Ministry collects multiple ethnicities from clients, the Ministry only reports a unique form of 'identified' ethnicity for core benefit data (one ethnic group per person with Māori coming first, Pacific groups second followed by other groups ending with NZ European).

Please note, in **Tables One, Two and Three**, in order to protect client privacy, some values 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 and public interest in the information.

To address question 2C, as at 30 June 2020, the average time to house in the Gisborne District TLA was 126 days.

3. *Do you have a representative dealing specifically with housing in the Kaiti area? If so:*
 - a. *Who is it?*
 - b. *Where are they based?*
 - c. *What is their contact phone number?*

I encourage you to contact the East Coast Regional Housing Manager, Stephen Brown. He is located in Napier and can be contacted at the following email or phone number: EC_Housing_Team@msd.govt.nz or 0800 559 009.

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 available to the wider public. 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 emergency housing in the Gisborne TLA, 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

PP. 

Karen Hocking
General Manager
Housing

Appendix One

Table One: The number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants granted, and total amount granted in the Gisborne District Territorial Local Authority, for the quarter ending 30 June 2020, broken down by accommodation type

Type of Accommodation Funded	Number of Grants	Distinct Clients	Total Amount Granted
Motel / Hotel	826	216	\$3,109,007
Hostel	6	S	\$8,824
Holiday park / Camp ground	51	S	\$111,864
Total	883	227	\$3,229,695

Notes:

- A client may have been granted more than one Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant in the time period.
- Clients may be represented across multiple Territorial Local Authorities (TLA) if they are regularly changing their accommodation location.
- This report only contains clients with a recorded residential address within the Gisborne District TLA.
- Clients with 'no fixed abode' and a recorded location in the area will also be included.
- In certain circumstances low numbers may potentially lead to individuals being identified.
- Due to these privacy concerns, numbers for some categories of clients have been suppressed or aggregated.
- Secondary suppression rules have also been applied when required. Suppressed numbers have been replaced by an 'S'.

Table Two: The number of clients on the Public Housing Register for the Gisborne District Territorial Local Authority as at 30 June 2020, broken down by prioritised ethnicity and register type

Prioritised Ethnicity	Housing Register	Transfer Register	Public Housing Register
Māori	414	53	467
Pacific Peoples	S	S	S
New Zealand European	S	S	53
Other	S	S	S
Unspecified	11	0	11
Total	484	58	542

Notes:

- This is a count of main applicants, broken down by the applicant's declared ethnicity on the application date.
- Ethnicity data is self-identified and multiple ethnicities may be chosen by an individual as fits their preference or self-concept.
- Multiple selected ethnicities are then prioritised into a hierarchy.
- The Māori ethnicity has the highest priority in this hierarchy, followed by Pacific peoples.
- New Zealand European has the lowest priority.
- This is to ensure that smaller and politically significant ethnic groups do not get overwhelmed by the larger ethnic groups.
- A single ethnicity is assigned to an individual based on this hierarchy.
- Ethnic groups do not currently align with Statistics New Zealand ethnicity groupings.
- Clients may be represented across multiple Territorial Local Authorities (TLA) if they are regularly changing their accommodation location.
- This report only contains clients with a recorded residential address within the Gisborne District TLA.
- Clients with 'no fixed abode' and a recorded location in the area will also be included.
- In certain circumstances low numbers may potentially lead to individuals being identified.
- Due to these privacy concerns, numbers for some categories of clients have been suppressed or aggregated.
- Secondary suppression rules have also been applied when required. Suppressed numbers have been replaced by an 'S'.

Table Three: The number of clients on the Public Housing Register for the Gisborne District Territorial Local Authority as at 30 June 2020, broken down by prioritised household and register type

Household type	Housing Register	Transfer Register	Total
2+ adults	31	0	31
2+ adults with child(ren)	S	S	40
Single age 24 years or younger	S	S	23
Single age 25 years +	200	14	214
Single with child(ren)	197	37	234
Total	484	58	542

Notes:

- Clients may be represented across multiple Territorial Local Authorities (TLA) if they are regularly changing their accommodation location.
- This report only contains clients with a recorded residential address within the Gisborne District TLA.
- Clients with 'no fixed abode' and a recorded location in the area will also be included.
- In certain circumstances low numbers may potentially lead to individuals being identified.
- Due to these privacy concerns, numbers for some categories of clients have been suppressed or aggregated.
- Secondary suppression rules have also been applied when required. Suppressed numbers have been replaced by an 'S'.