



04 SEP 2020

Tēnā koe

On 21 August 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *How many rental tenants/properties receive the accommodation supplement benefit in NZ?*

The Accommodation Supplement is a non-taxable benefit that provides assistance towards a client's accommodation costs. A person does not have to be getting a benefit to qualify for the Accommodation Supplement, however they must meet an income and asset test. More information about the Accommodation Supplement can be found at the following link on Work and Income's website: www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/accommodation-supplement.html.

I can advise that 232,947 clients were receiving the Accommodation Supplement to help them with their rent as at the end of June 2020. Please note that the Accommodation Supplement is also available to people who board or own their own home – these clients are not included in the above figure. Please also note that the Accommodation Supplement is generally not paid for clients in Housing New Zealand accommodation or any other Community Housing Provider property where the provider is receiving Income Related Rent.

I am unable to provide you with the number of properties receiving the Accommodation Supplement as the Ministry does not centrally hold such information. In some instances, there are multiple tenants in a property who are receiving the Accommodation Supplement. Therefore, in order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files. As such, I refuse this aspect of your request under section 18(f) of the 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.

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,

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- 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 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 Accommodation Supplements further with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding Accommodation Supplements, 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



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Bridget Saunders
**Manager Issue Resolution
Service Delivery**