



Tēnā koe

On 16 September 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *the table from page 18 of the following report to Cabinet updated for each quarter for 2020-2021:*
<https://covid19.govt.nz/assets/resources/proactive-release-2020-july/H4-Paper-and-Minute-Expanding-Access-to-Rent-Arrears-Assistance.pdf>
- *I would also like to understand the reason for the difference in numbers in this table and the data included in the quarterly housing reports for HSP. See p.8 of the report at the link below (esp. see Rent Advances figures):*
www.hud.govt.nz/assets/Community-and-Public-Housing/Follow-our-progress/Quarterly-Reports-2020/1c17940406/Public-Housing-Quarterly-Report-March-2020.pdf

On 17 September 2021, your request was transferred in full to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry), as the information to which your request relates is believed to be more closely connected to the functions of the Ministry. In these circumstances, we are required by section 14 of the Act to transfer your request.

On 22 September 2021, you amended your request to be for the following:

- *the table from page 18 of the following report to Cabinet updated for each quarter for 2019-2021:*
<https://covid19.govt.nz/assets/resources/proactive-release-2020-july/H4-Paper-and-Minute-Expanding-Access-to-Rent-Arrears-Assistance.pdf>
- *I would also like to understand the reason for the difference in numbers in this table and the data included in the quarterly housing reports for HSP. See p.8 of the report at the link below (esp. see Rent Advances figures):*
www.hud.govt.nz/assets/Community-and-Public-Housing/Follow-our-progress/Quarterly-Reports-2020/1c17940406/Public-Housing-Quarterly-Report-March-2020.pdf
- *The Cabinet paper refers to Rent Arrears Advances, which it explains as an advance of the main benefit, and the HUD report refers to Rent in Advance, and different figures are given. Are these different forms of assistance?*

For the sake of clarity, your questions are addressed in turn below:

- *the table from page 18 of the following report to Cabinet updated for each quarter for 2019-2021:*

<https://covid19.govt.nz/assets/resources/proactive-release-2020-july/H4-Paper-and-Minute-Expanding-Access-to-Rent-Arrears-Assistance.pdf>

Please see the Excel spreadsheet enclosed for a table showing the number of hardship grants for Rent Arrears Assistance between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2021, broken down by quarter ending and type of grant.

You may notice some small discrepancies in the data compared to data which was previously released to you. This is due to random rounding which has been applied to the data to protect the identities of individuals or entities from published data.

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- *The Cabinet paper refers to Rent Arrears Advances, which it explains as an advance of the main benefit, and the HUD report refers to Rent in Advance, and different figures are given. Are these different forms of assistance?*

The reason for the discrepancy between the figures in the two datasets you have referred to is because Rent Arrears Assistance and Rent in Advance are different products.

Rent Arrears Assistance is a payment designed to help people in sustainable accommodation, that have incurred rent arrears, retain their property. It is a one-off, recoverable payment of up to \$2,000 and is available once in a 52 week period (unless there are exceptional circumstances). For more information about Rent Arrears Assistance, please see the following link:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/live-in-home/housing-costs/rent-arrears.html.

Rent in Advance is a non-recoverable payment of up to \$2,000 towards the cost of rent for clients who are registered for social housing. This is for clients who are considered able to afford and sustain a move into alternative housing typically a private rental. It addresses any hardship for the client by reducing the need to borrow to pay for rent. This assistance is only available for clients who are unable to get an Advance Payment of Benefit or a Recoverable Assistance Payment. For more information about Rent in Advance, please see the following link:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/move-house/bond-and-rent-in-advance/rent-in-advance.html.

The \$644,592 figure quoted for Rent Arrears Assistance in the Cabinet paper on page 18, and in HUD's Quarterly Report for Housing Support Products Rent Arrears on page 8, are for the same product and therefore have presented the same amount.

The \$154,967 figure quoted for Rent in Advance in the HUD report (page 8) is for a different product.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

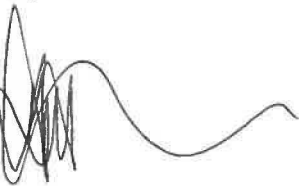
- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

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 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, 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



Karen Hocking
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Housing