



14 March 2022

Tēnā koe

On 15 February 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

1. *Number's of people that are being supported in Taihape accessing into Emergency Housing*
  - *Ethnicity data*
  - *Age ranges*
  - *Residency status*
    - *Connection to Taihape*
    - *Come from outside the area*
2. *Numbers of people that are being supported in Taihape accessing into Social Housing*
  - *Ethnicity data for these people*
  - *Age ranges*
  - *Residency status*
    - *Connection to Taihape*
    - *Come from outside the area*

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 up house prices and rents. People on low incomes are most affected by rising housing costs and many seek financial help through the Ministry. The on-going COVID-19 pandemic has also contributed to increased demand for temporary housing where people have been unable to remain in or return to their usual residence.

The Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (EH SNG) is available to people who cannot remain in their usual place of residence, if any, and do not have access to other accommodation which is adequate for them or their family's needs. The Ministry pays EH SNGs directly to the accommodation supplier

and assistance is generally granted for up to seven nights but can be extended dependant on individual circumstances.

After these seven nights Work and Income arrange another appointment with the client to discuss their housing situation and if another grant is required. The Ministry works hard to support people in Emergency Housing to secure a long-term housing solution, either through Public Housing and private rental accommodation. Other options including transitional housing can also be explored as an option depending on availability and the individual's circumstances.

The Ministry recognises that motels are not a long-term solution or the solution that we want to deliver for people who are potentially in a vulnerable situation. They provide a short-term solution while more sustainable options are progressed. More information about EH SNGs is available at the following link: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/emergency-housing.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/emergency-housing.html).

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.

Please note that the Social Housing Register is currently referred to as the Public Housing Register.

The Public Housing Register (the Register) consists of the Housing Register and the Transfer Register. The Housing Register records those who are not currently in Public Housing but who have been assessed as eligible for Public Housing. The Transfer Register represents those already in Public Housing who are eligible to be rehoused, generally due to a change in circumstances prompting a move to somewhere more appropriate to their needs.

There is a high demand for housing – Emergency, Transitional and Public Housing – across the country, which is reflected in the enclosed data. The Ministry has strong relationships with local government, non-government and other community organisations working together to support people who present with housing needs, as well as offering other wrap-around services people may need.

Many factors contribute to the numbers presented in the Public Housing Register for the years in question. The needs of New Zealanders are changing, and many families are finding it harder to access the private rental market. This is particularly true for those who have been renting for a long time and are now looking to buy their first home in an increasingly competitive and expensive housing market.

The Public Housing Register is dynamic rather than static, and it changes as people's circumstances and situations change. As such, the length of time

spent on the Register awaiting housing can vary significantly. Placing people and families into houses is about matching them with the right house in the area they want to live. This includes ensuring the family has the right number of bedrooms, is close to essential services such as schools, and that the accommodation meets any disability needs if appropriate. Those assessed as having the greater need for housing will be prioritised higher.

Nationally there is an issue of housing demand exceeding supply. More housing is needed to support the most vulnerable people in our community and the Government, through a number of agencies, is working to increase the amount of Public Housing. More information about Public Housing is contained in the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development's quarterly reports which can be found at the following link: [www.hud.govt.nz/research-and-publications/statistics-and-research/public-housing-reports/](http://www.hud.govt.nz/research-and-publications/statistics-and-research/public-housing-reports/).

Further information regarding the assessment of a client's housing need, housing need priority ratings and the calculation of overall priority ratings can be found on the Work and Income website at the following link: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/assessment-of-housing-need-01.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/assessment-of-housing-need-01.html).

Please see the following tables enclosed in the attached Excel spreadsheet:

- **Table One:** The number of EH SNGs, amount granted and the number of distinct clients in the Rangitikei TLA during 1 October 2021 and 31 December 2021, by age group
- **Table Two:** The number of EH SNGs for clients in the Rangitikei TLA during 1 October 2021 and 31 December 2021, by ethnicity
- **Table Three:** The number of Public Housing tenancies in the Rangitikei TLA as at 31 December 2021, by age group
- **Table Four:** The number of Public Housing tenancies in the Rangitikei TLA as at 31 December 2021, by ethnicity
- **Table Five:** The number of applicants on the Public Housing register in Rangitikei TLA as at 31 December 2021, by age group
- **Table Six:** The number of applicants on the Public Housing register in Rangitikei TLA as at 31 December 2021, by ethnicity

Regarding the tables provided the Ministry can only provide the data by the Rangitikei Territorial Local Authority (TLA), please note that the Territorial Local Authority (TLA) is estimated based on the clients' address at the time of the grant. This TLA may not be the same as the address of the Emergency Housing supplier. Where the client address is not recorded, the location of the Ministry's service centre case managing the client has been used to approximate which TLA a client resides in. However, as the Ministry has switched to working from national queues, EH SNGs and other hardship grants could be granted by a case manager working anywhere in New

Zealand. Therefore, in such cases, the TLA may not reflect the actual client address or location. Due to the transient nature of people receiving EH SNGs, the recorded address for a client may also be that of a trusted family member or friend who receives mail on their behalf.

The Ministry does not encourage clients to move to Taihape or any other location in order to receive accommodation there. However, the Ministry's Emergency Housing policy and operational policy does not preclude people from outside a specific location, in this case Taihape, seeking Public or Emergency Housing in a certain place. There may be certain circumstances in which the Ministry would grant a client from outside Taihape Emergency Housing in the city. For example, if a client living in Bay of Plenty needed to leave their usual accommodation and had whānau support in Taihape, the Ministry may consider granting Emergency Housing there by request of the applicant, and vice versa. The key considerations would be the best interests of the client, whether there is a legitimate need to move, and whether Emergency Housing is available. The same rationale applies to clients who are on the Housing Register.

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'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](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding Emergency and Public Housing in Taihape, 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui



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Housing**