



16 March 2022

Tēnā koe

On 20 January 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *a Wage Subsidy data export as published on <https://services.workandincome.govt.nz/eps>*

The Wage Subsidy Scheme enabled rapid support for thousands of New Zealand businesses during a time of uncertainty and ensured that employees were able to remain connected with their employers during the COVID-19 lockdowns. The scheme was set up on a high-trust model, in order to quickly deliver funds to support workers, families and businesses.

The Ministry developed the online search tool with close involvement from the Privacy Commissioner to ensure compliance with the Privacy Act 1993. The groups the Ministry were particularly concerned about, from a privacy perspective, were sole traders, as the publication of their information on a public register is also the publication of personal information and would reveal that they are personally receiving financial support. The Ministry is conscious that for some, there is a stigma around receiving government support.

The information available behind the search tool includes only information about employers with three or more employees. Sole traders with two or less employees are excluded from the searchable database to further protect the privacy of individuals who had applied. In the dataset made available to you, sole traders with two or less employees have had the amount paid set to \$0.

Please see enclosed, the dataset which sits behind the search tool. This dataset includes the business name, the number of employees, and total amount of Wage Subsidy paid, as at 18 February 2022, for all employers with 3 or more employees.

Please note the following regarding that dataset provided:

- it does not include businesses that have repaid the subsidy in full
- the information is accurate as at the 18 February 2022. Changes may have been made since this date. Repayments that were made by business within 2 to 3 days of the 18 February may not be included
- it does not include regional or industry sector breakdowns
- business names are the names given by employers on the Wage Subsidy application. Businesses may be known by, or operate under, different names.

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.

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



Melissa Gill

**Deputy Chief Executive
Organisational Assurance and Communication**