



24 May 2022

Tēnā koe

On 5 May 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information in relating to fast-food vouchers being given to people by the Ministry:

- *The details and value of all fast-food vouchers (McDonalds, Burger King etc) that have been given to welfare or emergency housing recipients over the past two years.*
- *The details and value of any contracts with care package providers for welfare or emergency housing recipients over the past two years. Please include what is contained in these care packages, including any vouchers.*

In regard to your request on fast-food vouchers and contracts with care package providers being given by the Ministry to welfare or emergency housing recipients over the past two years. I am refusing your request under section 18(g) of the Act, as the Ministry does not have any record of information on fast-food vouchers or contracts with care package providers for supply to our clients. Therefore, this information is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation.

However, as part of the New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan, the Ministry introduced Flexible Funding Assistance (FFA) in November 2020, to assist families with children staying longer in Emergency Housing than anticipated. The assistance is in part a recognition that these families with children need additional support. FFA can be used for individuals, and where appropriate, groups of children.

FFA can be used for individuals, and where appropriate, groups of children. For example, the Ministry has partnered with community organisations to deliver after-school programmes and school holiday programmes for children

in emergency housing. Other examples include sports gear, swimming pool passes, bikes and movie passes. More information about FFA can be found on Work and Income's website, at the following link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/flexible-funding-assistance/index.html.

The Ministry also can assist people to pay for food in the form of a food grant if someone is on a low income or benefit if someone finds themselves in a situation where they have had to pay for an essential cost that means they don't have enough money to pay for food. www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/urgent-costs/food.html#null.

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'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 fast-food vouchers, 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
**Group General Manager
Housing**