



12 October 2022

Tēnā koe

On 14 September 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *How much has the government spent on emergency housing in Rotorua since 2020?*
- *How many people have gone from a rental property into emergency housing since 2020 – 2022?*
- *How much does MSD pay towards accommodation supplement for Rotorua rental properties?*

On 20 September 2022, the Ministry contacted you to clarify bullet point one of your request. On the same day, you responded to confirm you were asking for Special Needs Grant expenditure.

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 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

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.

For people with high and complex needs, it can sometimes be challenging to identify suitable long-term housing, which can lead to longer stays in emergency housing. Work and Income work closely with these people to see what can be done to ensure that once they have a home of their own, they have the skills to sustain it, and the support they need to keep it.

For the sake of clarity, I will respond to each part of your request in turn.

- *How much has the government spent on emergency housing in Rotorua since 2020?*

Please find overleaf **Appendix One, Table One** which shows the amount of EH SNG grants in the Rotorua District Territorial Local Authority over the period 1 July 2017 through to 30 June 2022, broken down by quarter end.

- *How many people have gone from a rental property into emergency housing since 2020 – 2022?*

I am unable to provide you with this information as it is held in notes on individual case files. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review a substantial number of files. As such, I refuse 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.

- *How much does MSD pay towards accommodation supplement for Rotorua rental properties?*

Please find overleaf **APPENDIX TWO, Table Two** which shows the amount of Accommodation Supplement paid for rent, weekly for clients registered at the Rotorua service centre, as at the end of each quarter during the period September 2017 to June 2022, broken down by quarter end.

Regarding Tables One and Two, 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.

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 Emergency Housing in Rotorua, 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**

APPENDIX ONE

Table One: The amount of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants for the Rotorua District Territorial Local Authority over the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2022, broken down by quarter end.

Quarter End	Amount Granted
September 2017	\$382,102.43
December 2017	\$207,048.46
March 2018	\$49,668.32
June 2018	\$211,602.80
September 2018	\$855,507.35
December 2018	\$1,604,392.33
March 2019	\$2,278,721.18
June 2019	\$3,362,249.83
September 2019	\$4,479,251.05
December 2019	\$4,482,451.92
March 2020	\$3,850,875.18
June 2020	\$5,058,176.82
September 2020	\$4,674,560.88
December 2020	\$5,650,075.69
March 2021	\$5,692,225.81
June 2021	\$6,038,024.47
September 2021	\$4,524,454.14
December 2021	\$5,654,247.47
March 2022	\$5,467,504.72
June 2022	\$5,187,965.50

APPENDIX TWO

Table 2: The amount of Accommodation Supplement paid for rent, weekly for clients registered at the Rotorua service centre as at the end of each quarter during the period September 2017 to June 2022, broken down by quarter end.

Quarter End	Weekly amount payable
September 2017	\$314,725.50
December 2017	\$325,969.50
March 2018	\$384,415.50
June 2018	\$388,564.50
September 2018	\$390,454.00
December 2018	\$406,151.50
March 2019	\$402,678.50
June 2019	\$407,164.00
September 2019	\$423,048.00
December 2019	\$444,311.00
March 2020	\$441,161.00
June 2020	\$480,138.00
September 2020	\$506,113.50
December 2020	\$525,226.00
March 2021	\$531,896.50
June 2021	\$521,772.60
September 2021	\$541,423.00
December 2021	\$555,034.00
March 2022	\$542,701.00
June 2022	\$556,364.00

Notes for both Table One and Two:

- Amount granted is not necessarily the amount spent.
- TLA is estimated based on the clients address at the time of the grant. It may not be the same as the address of the emergency housing provider.
- Ungeocoded address records that are unable to be matched to a TLA through suburb and city details have an unknown TLA.