



25 January 2023

Tēnā koe

On 21 December 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *I seek to obtain the historical breakdown by ethnicity and age [of the Public Housing Register] for just the Auckland, Far North, Kaipara and Whangarei regions. Ideally, we need both items in a drill down form - i.e. - so we can say there are X people of X ethnicity aged X in X region.*
- *I can confirm I am interested in the same history back to Sept 2017 that is in the stats which are available on your website.*

On 23 December 2022, the Ministry emailed you to clarify the timeframe you were looking for and whether you would like the data broken down by quarter or annually. On the same day, you clarified your request to:

- *If it would shorten the time to complete the job, we could probably get away with annual rather than quarterly figures. In other words, if we could receive the data requested for Sept 17, Sept 18, Sept 19 etc through to Sept 22, that would be fine.*

When New Zealanders need Public Housing, their needs are recorded on either the Housing Register or the Transfer Register. The Housing Register shows people who are not currently in Public Housing but who have been assessed as eligible for Public Housing. The Transfer Register shows people already in Public Housing who have applied to be rehoused. The combined register is referred to as the Public Housing Register (the Register). While the Ministry completes housing assessments which inform the Register, responsibility for funding and supply sits with the Ministry for Housing and Urban Development and Kainga Ora, respectively. More information about the Register is available here: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/housing/housing-register.html.

The Register is dynamic rather than static, and it changes as people's circumstances and situations change. 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 greater need for housing will be prioritised higher. As people's needs change, their priority on the Register may change also. As such, the length of time spent on the Register awaiting housing can vary significantly.

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, here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/assessment-of-housing-need-01.html.

Please find attached **Appendix One** containing **Table One** showing the number of clients on the Public Housing Register in the Territorial Local Authorities of Auckland Super City, Far North, Kaipara and Whangarei Districts from 30 September 2017 to 30 September 2022 broken down by quarter, age and ethnicity.

Please note, in the data table provided, Territorial Local Authority is based on the main applicant's residential address as at the end of each period.

From December 2021, we have changed our ethnicity reporting to an approach called 'total response'. Making this change means we recognise all aspects of someone's ethnicity. This change reflects our clients more accurately, aligns our approach with Statistics NZ's reporting and reflects best practice. Ethnicity is about people's identity and sense of belonging. Ethnicity measures cultural affiliation, rather than race, ancestry, nationality, or citizenship.

Ethnicity is self-perceived, and people can identify with more than one ethnic group. Previously, we reported ethnicity using an approach called 'prioritised ethnicity'. 'Prioritised ethnicity' means that we allocate people to a single ethnic group in an order of priority. The priority used by the Ministry previously was Māori, Pacific Peoples, Other and NZ European. For more information about 'total response' for ethnicity reporting, please see: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/tools/how-we-report-ethnicity.html.

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 about the historical breakdown of the Public Housing Register for Auckland, Far North, Kaipara and Whangarei regions 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



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Housing