



7 July 2023

Tēnā koe

On 12 June 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), information regarding motels contracted for emergency housing.

The Ministry contacted you on 16 June and advised you that the Ministry does not contract for emergency housing, and that suppliers are paid Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants on the basis of demand. Further, you were advised that motels are not the sole type of accommodation provided as emergency housing, there are various types of accommodation offered by suppliers.

As such, we suggested refining your request to be for information regarding all types of emergency housing suppliers, rather than for contracted motels. On the same day, you agreed to refine your request to be for the following information:

1. *The number of Emergency Housing Suppliers Nationwide / Kapiti granted EH SNG in the years 2019-2022*
2. *Amount paid for EH SNG in Kapiti in the years 2019-2022*
3. *The top 5 Emergency Housing Suppliers Nationwide (by amount granted) granted EH SNG per year 2019-2022*
 - a. *Total number of nights granted*
 - b. *Total amount granted*
4. *The top 5 Emergency Housing Suppliers Kapiti (by amount granted) granted EH SNG per year 2019-2022*
 - a. *Total number of nights granted*
 - b. *Total amount granted*

Under section 15(1AA) of the Official Information Act, the Ministry treated your refined request as a new request that replaced the original request. This restarted the 20-working day response period.

Demand for housing across New Zealand is growing and many 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 or private rental accommodation. Other options including transitional housing can also be explored as an option depending on availability and the individual's circumstances.

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.

As advised in your refinement, the Ministry does not contract directly to emergency housing suppliers. In order to receive an EH SNG payment, an accommodation supplier must register with the Ministry, as the Ministry can only pay into the bank accounts of businesses who are registered as suppliers. This registration does not create a contractual relationship between the Ministry and the accommodation supplier.

More information about EH SNGs is available at the following link:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/emergency-housing.html

The Ministry will now respond to each part of your request in turn.

- *The number of Emergency Housing Suppliers Nationwide / Kapiti granted EH SNG in the years 2019-2022*

- *Amount paid for EH SNG in Kapiti in the years 2019-2022*

Please see **Table One** in the attached Excel spreadsheet for information on the number of suppliers used for emergency housing and the total amount granted in the Kapiti Coast District and nationally during the period 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2022.

- *The top 5 Emergency Housing Suppliers Kapiti (by amount granted) granted EH SNG per year 2019-2022*
 - a. Total number of nights granted*
 - b. Total amount granted*

Please see **Table Two** in the attached Excel spreadsheet for the top 5 Suppliers granted Emergency Housing (by amount granted) in Kapiti Coast District during the period 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2022, broken down by year.

- *The top 5 Emergency Housing Suppliers Nationwide (by amount granted) granted EH SNG per year 2019-2022*
 - a. Total number of nights granted*
 - b. Total amount granted*

Please see **Table Three** in the attached Excel spreadsheet for the top 5 Suppliers granted Emergency Housing (by amount granted) nationwide during the period 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2022, broken down by year.

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 regarding EH SNGs in Kapiti, 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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Hocking', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Karen Hocking
Group General Manager
Housing