



7 March 2024

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your emails dated 8 February 2024 to Hon Louise Upston, Minister for Social Development and Employment, and the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) in which you requested information relating to red stickered properties in Auckland.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Before I respond to your request, you may find it useful to read the following information about the Temporary Accommodation Assistance Programme (TAA).

Temporary Accommodation Assistance

The TAA was established on 4 September 2023 to support homeowners who were displaced from their homes following certain severe weather events.

This means that to qualify for TAA, an applicant must be an owner of the affected home and be living in that home as their usual place of residence immediately before the severe weather event. If the applicant had rented out the affected home, or the house was vacant, they would not have been 'displaced' from their home.

Where the affected home is fully owned by a Trust, the applicant does not qualify for the TAA because they are not considered to be an owner of the affected home.

Further information about investment properties and trusts in relation to TAA is available here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/temporary-accommodation-assistance-niwe/homeowner-of-affected-home.html.

You will find my response to each part of your request, made under the Act, set out below.

I keep asking to see the legal legislation that states landlords and homes in a trust must not get any financial assistance.

The TAA welfare programme is available here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/legislation/welfare-programmes/temporary-accommodation-assistance-north-island-weather-events-programme/index.html.

You may find the following clauses most useful.

- Clause 3: The purpose relates to “homeowners”. This means that people whose homes are owned by trusts are not included.
- Clause 4. Interpretation: This section includes relevant definitions for the welfare programme. This includes a definition of “affected premises”, which means a home that is owned by the applicant and that they usually occupied at the time of the severe weather event.
- Clause 7. Eligibility: This section covers the broad eligibility criteria for TAA.

I want to see the minutes of the meeting where it was discussed so I can understand why a handful of us have been denied any assistance.

And I want to see the policy where it states Landlords and homes in trusts must not receive financial assistance.

The information you have requested is publicly available on the Ministry’s website and can be reviewed at the following links:

- Cabinet Paper: “North Island Weather Events: Interim support for displaced homeowners with private rental arrangements”
www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/information-releases/cabinet-papers/2023/north-island-weather-events-interim-support-for-displaced-homeowners-with-private-rental-arrangements/paper-north-island-weather-events-interim-support-for-displaced-homeowners-with-private-rental-arrangements.pdf.
- Cabinet Minute: “North Island Weather Events: Interim support for displaced homeowners with private rental arrangements”
www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/information-releases/cabinet-papers/2023/north-island-weather-events-interim-support-for-displaced-homeowners-with-private-rental-arrangements/cab-23-min-0312-minute.pdf.

Please see page 2 of the Cabinet Minute for the criteria an applicant must meet to be eligible for the TAA.

While applicants in the situations outlined above are not eligible for TAA, there are other supports available to assist people affected by the severe weather events in Auckland.

For example, the Tāmaki Makaurau Recovery Office has a Storm Recovery Navigation Service that can work alongside people to help them access any information, services and support they may need. Their contact details (including phone, email, online form and drop in sessions) can be found here: www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/recovery-extreme-weather-disasters/Pages/storm-recovery-navigation-service.aspx.

People can also text or call 1737 free of charge to speak to a trained counsellor at any time (24 hours a day 7 days a week) if they feel this support would be helpful to them at this difficult time.

People may also wish to contact their bank and utility companies to discuss options for relief for their damaged property and also explore applying for rates relief through the Auckland Council. More information about rates relief for uninhabitable

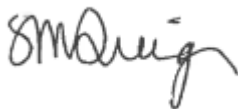
storm-damaged properties is available at the following link:
www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/recovery-extreme-weather-disasters/recover-disaster/Pages/rates-relief-uninhabitable-storm-damaged-properties.aspx.

I will publish this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

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 my decision on your request, 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.

Yours sincerely

pp. 

Magnus O'Neill
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services