



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA



# Ministry of Social Development **Benefit Fact Sheets**

**Snapshot - June 2019 Quarter**

The Benefit Fact Sheets provide a high-level view of trends in benefit receipt. The Benefit Fact Sheets are published quarterly and contain information on the benefit support provided by the Ministry.

New Zealand Government

# In the Benefit Fact Sheets

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# Main benefit assistance

Main benefits for those of working age include: Jobseeker Support (JS), Sole Parent Support (SPS), Supported Living Payment (SLP), Youth Payment and Young Parent Payment (YP/YPP), Emergency Benefit (EB), Emergency Maintenance Allowance (EMA), Jobseeker Support Student Hardship (JSSH), Widow's Benefit Overseas (WBO), and Sole Parent Support Overseas (SPSO).

**Figure 1a. Number of working-age people receiving main benefits, at the end of the last six June quarters**



**Figure 1b. Proportion of working-age population receiving main benefits, at the end of the last six June quarters**



■ Jobseeker Support
 ■ Supported Living Payment
 ■ Sole Parent Support
 ■ Other Main Benefits

**291,969** working-age people receiving a main benefit as at the end of June 2019

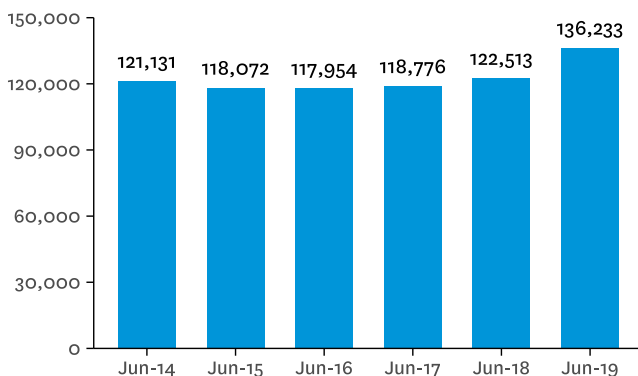
The number of working-age people receiving main benefits as at the end of June 2019 was 5.2 percent higher than at the end of June 2018. Benefit numbers as a proportion of the working-age population increased to 9.7 percent, compared to 9.4 percent, as at the end of June 2018.

**9.7 percent** of the working-age population receiving a main benefit as at the end of June 2019

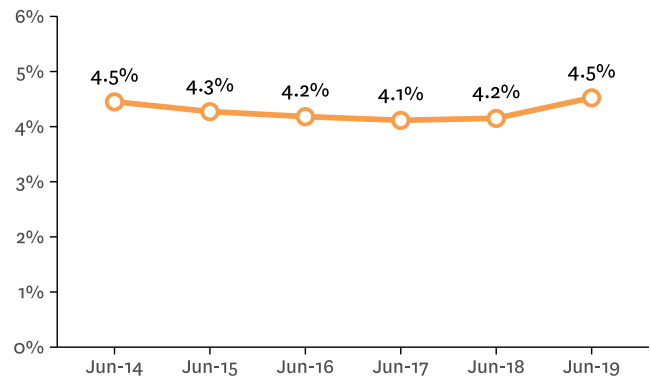
The working-age population are those aged between 18-64 of the estimated New Zealand resident population, year-ended as at June. The proportion of the working-age population uses the estimate for the year ending June, so estimates as at end of June 2018 have been used for the June 2019 quarter.

## Jobseeker Support (JS)

**Figure 2a. Number of working-age people receiving Jobseeker Support, at the end of the last six June quarters**



**Figure 2b. Proportion of working-age population receiving Jobseeker Support, at the end of the last six June quarters**



**136,233** working-age people receiving JS as at the end of June 2019

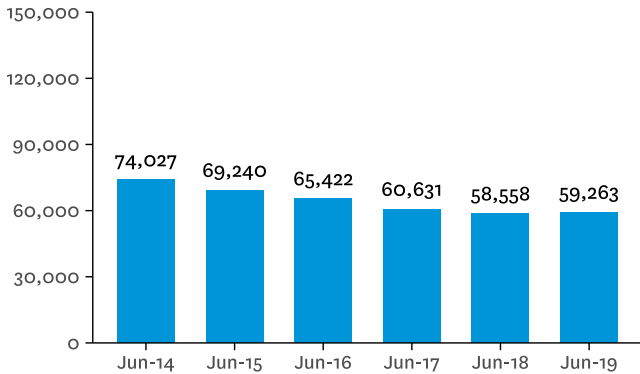
The number of working-age people on Jobseeker Support has increased when compared to the end of June 2018, by 13,720 to 136,233 as at the end of June 2019. This is a 11.2 percent increase since June 2018.

**4.5 percent** of the working-age population receiving JS as at the end of June 2019

Jobseeker Support is for people who can usually look for or prepare for work. It also includes people who can only work part-time or cannot look for work at the moment (e.g. they have a health condition, injury or disability).

## Sole Parent Support (SPS)

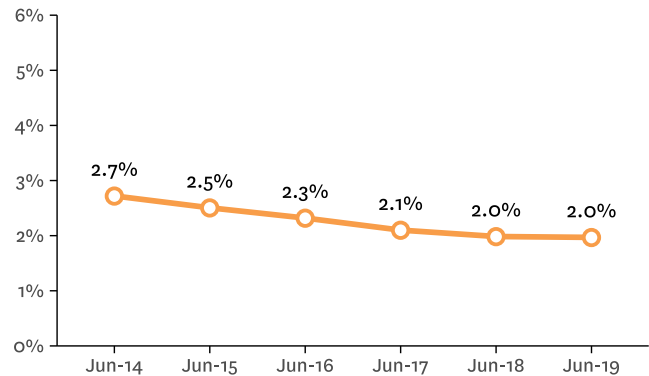
**Figure 3a. Number of working-age people receiving Sole Parent Support, at the end of the last six June quarters**



**59,263** working-age people receiving SPS as at the end of June 2019

**2.0 percent** of the working-age population receiving SPS as at the end of June 2019

**Figure 3b. Proportion of working-age population receiving Sole Parent Support, at the end of the last six June quarters**

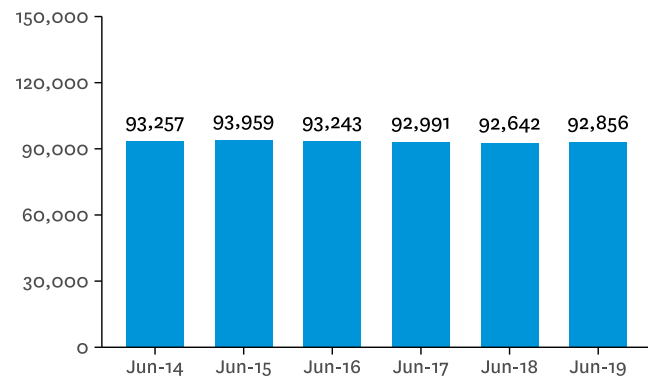


The number of working-age people on Sole Parent Support increased by 1.2 percent to 59,263 as at June 2019, since the June 2018 quarter. The proportion of working-age people receiving SPS decreased consistently over the previous June quarters, but has stabilised at 2.0 percent since June 2018.

Sole Parent Support is for single parents, with at least one dependent child under 14 years, who can look for or prepare for part-time work.

## Supported Living Payments (SLP)

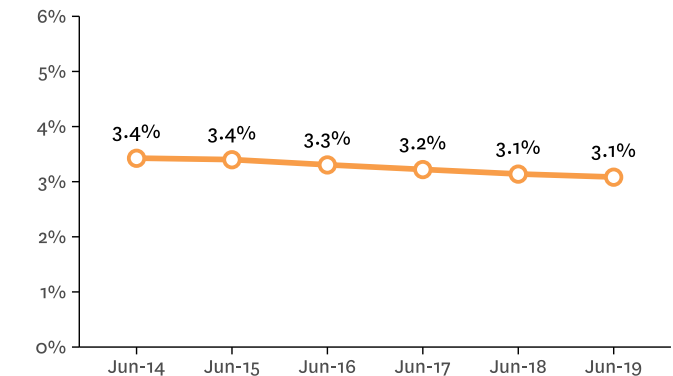
**Figure 4a. Number of working-age people receiving Supported Living Payment, at the end of the last six June quarters**



**92,856** working-age people receiving SLP as at the end of June 2019

**3.1 percent** of the working-age population receiving SLP as at the end of June 2019

**Figure 4b. Proportion of working-age population receiving Supported Living Payment, at the end of the last six June quarters**



The number of working-age people on Supported Living Payment has remained stable when compared to the end of June 2018. There were 92,856 SLP recipients as at June 2019, which is 214 more than at the end of June 2018.

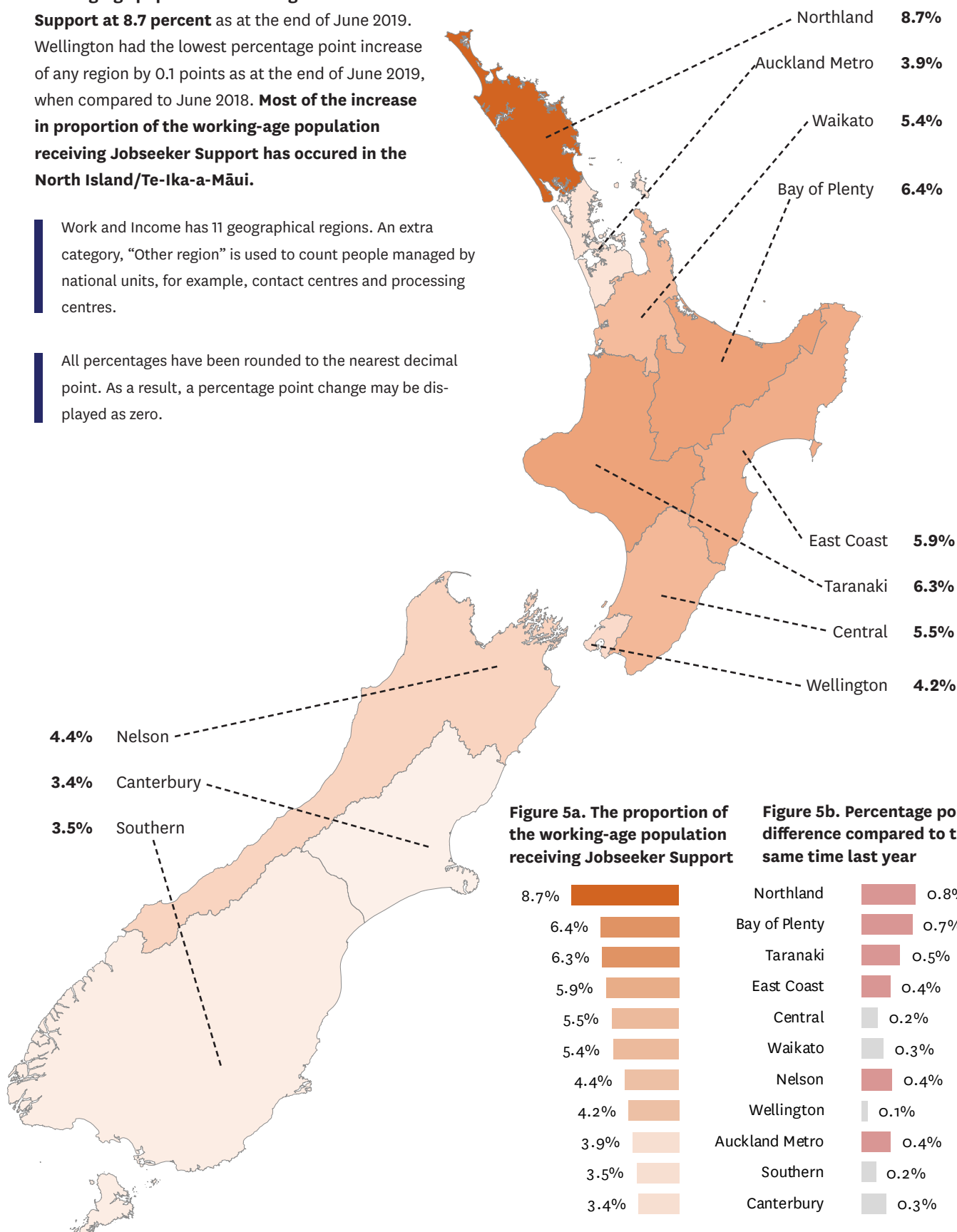
Supported Living Payment is for people who have, or care for someone with, a health condition, injury or disability that severely limits their ability to work on a long-term basis. The long-term nature of conditions for people on Supported Living Payment mean that very few people move from Supported Living Payment into paid work or to another benefit.

# Jobseeker Support regional distribution, as a proportion of the working-age population, by Work and Income Region, as at June 2019

**Northland has the highest proportion of the working-age population receiving Jobseeker Support at 8.7 percent** as at the end of June 2019. Wellington had the lowest percentage point increase of any region by 0.1 points as at the end of June 2019, when compared to June 2018. **Most of the increase in proportion of the working-age population receiving Jobseeker Support has occurred in the North Island/Te-Ika-a-Māui.**

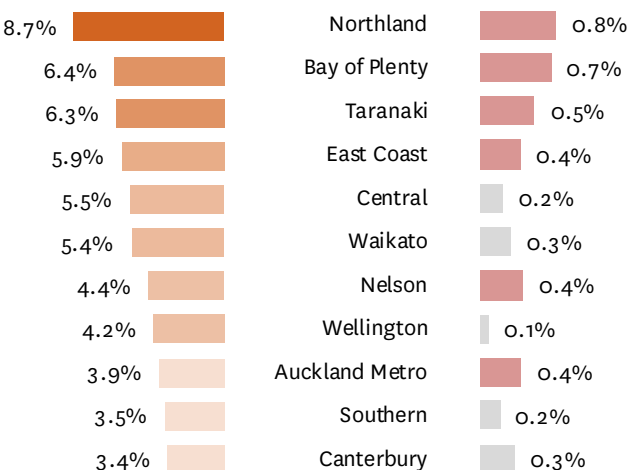
Work and Income has 11 geographical regions. An extra category, "Other region" is used to count people managed by national units, for example, contact centres and processing centres.

All percentages have been rounded to the nearest decimal point. As a result, a percentage point change may be displayed as zero.



**Figure 5a. The proportion of the working-age population receiving Jobseeker Support**

**Figure 5b. Percentage point difference compared to the same time last year**



# Sole Parent Support regional distribution as a proportion of the working-age population, by Work and Income Region, as at June 2019

Northland had the highest proportion of the working-age population receiving Sole Parent Support, 3.8 percent as at the end of June 2019. Northland also had the largest decrease by 0.2 percentage points when compared to June 2018. Bay of Plenty had an increase of 0.1 percentage points, compared to June 2018, to 3.0 percent of the working-age population, as at June 2019.

Work and Income has 11 geographical regions. An extra category, "Other region" is used to count people managed by national units, for example, contact centres and processing centres.

All percentages have been rounded to the nearest decimal point. As a result, a percentage point change may be displayed as zero.

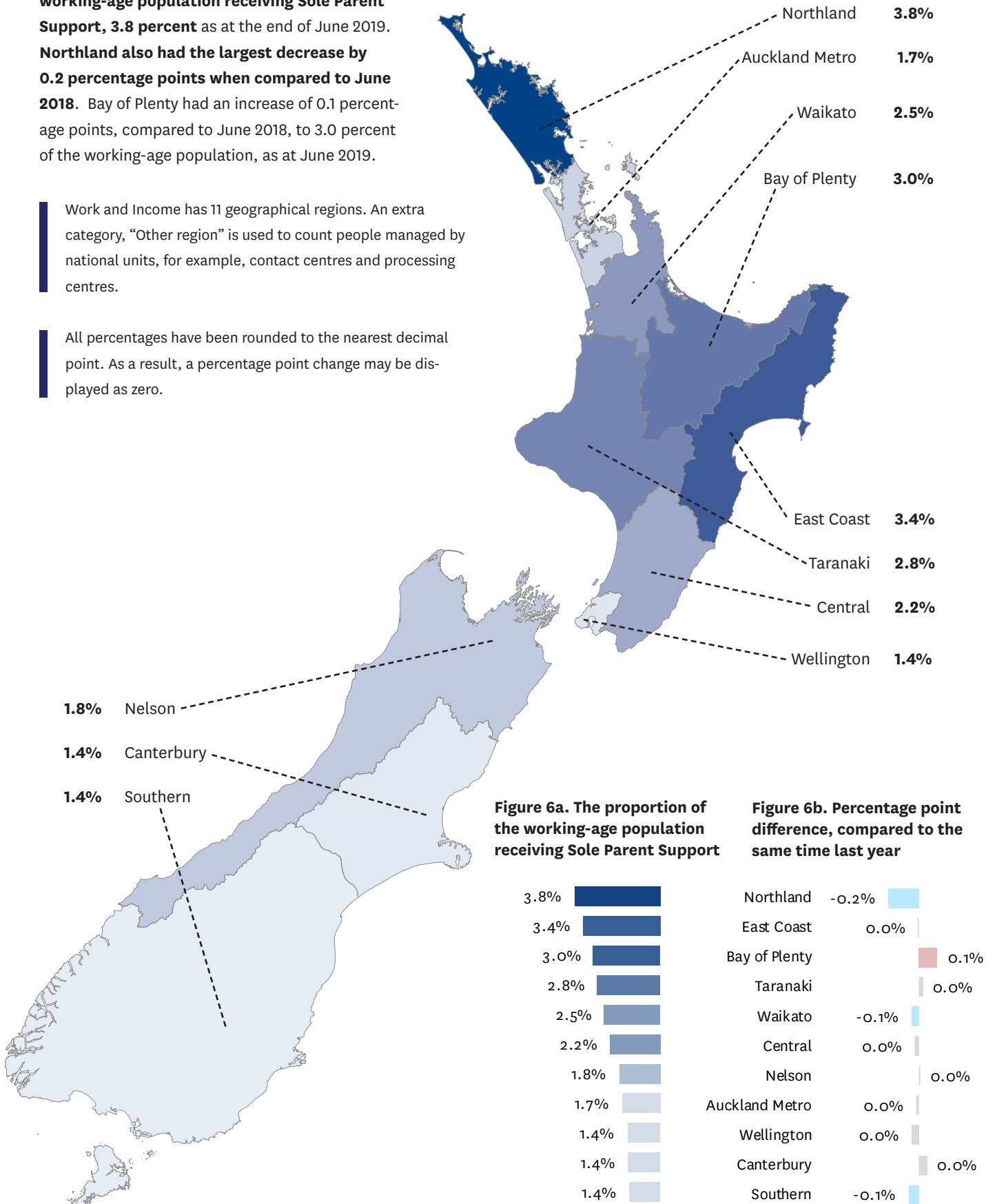
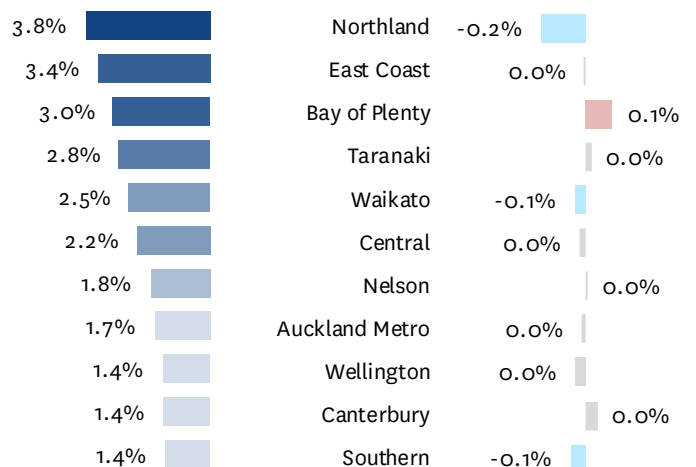


Figure 6a. The proportion of the working-age population receiving Sole Parent Support

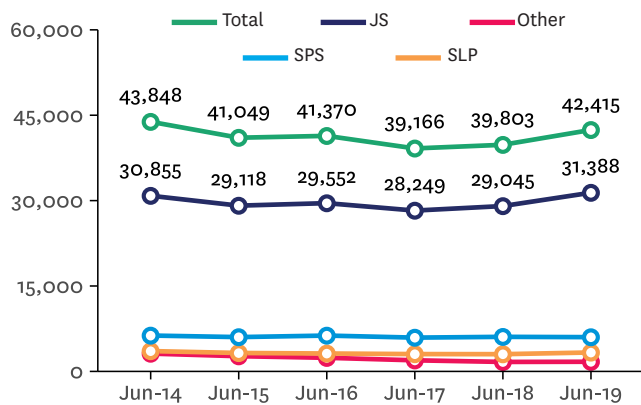
Figure 6b. Percentage point difference, compared to the same time last year



# Benefit grants and cancellations

## Grants

Figure 7. The number of benefit grants, in the June quarter, for the last six quarters



The number of benefits granted increased by 2,612, compared to the June 2018 quarter, to 42,415 for the June 2019 quarter. Compared to June 2018, there was an increase in benefit grants for Jobseeker Support in the June 2019 quarter.

A grant is the formal acceptance of entitlement to a benefit. The numbers reported here are for benefits granted in the June quarter for the last six June quarters (i.e. 1 April to 30 June).

## Cancellations

Figure 8a. The number of cancellations by benefit, in the June quarter, for the last six quarters

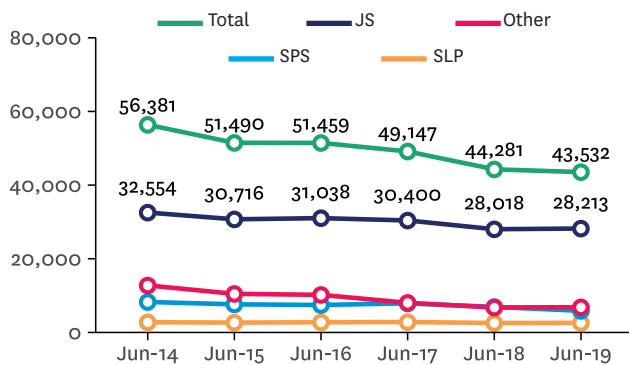
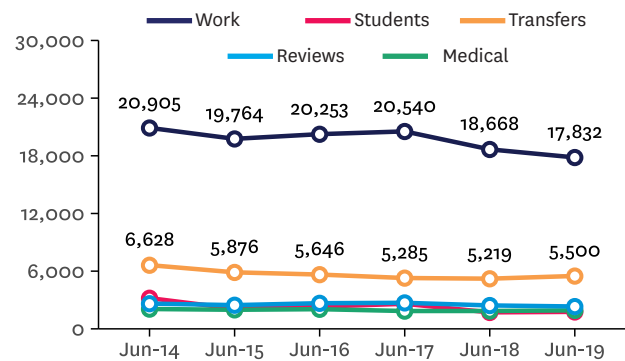


Figure 8b. The number of cancellations by selected reason, in the June quarter, for the last six quarters



**43,532** benefit cancels made in the June 2019 quarter

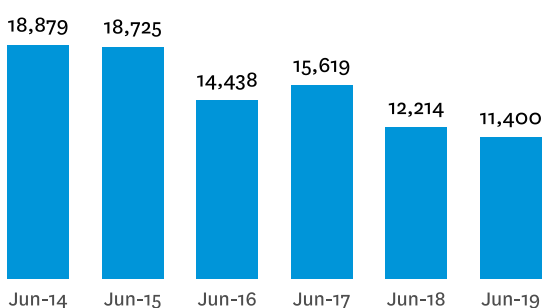
The number of benefits cancelled has decreased by 749, compared to the June 2018 quarter, to 43,532 in the June 2019 quarter. Obtaining work, a main reason for benefit cancellations, decreased by 836, compared to the June 2018 quarter, to 17,832 in the June 2019 quarter.

**17,832** benefit cancels made in the June 2019 quarter due to entering paid work

A cancellation (cancel) is the formal process that stops the entitlement to a benefit. The numbers reported above are for benefits cancelled within the June quarter for the last six June quarters (i.e. 1 April to 30 June).

## Benefit sanctions

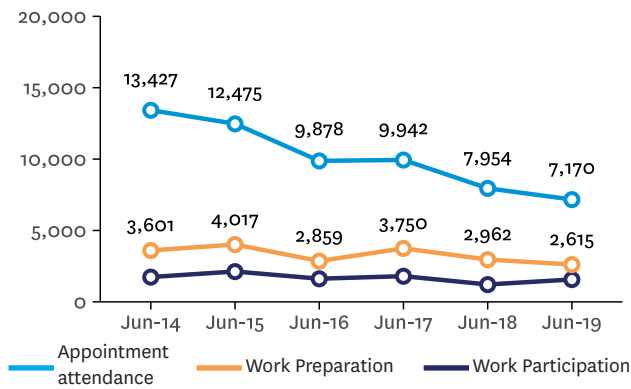
Figure 9. The number of sanctions for unfulfilled work obligations in the June quarter, over the last six quarters



The number of sanctions issued in the June 2019 quarter was 11,400. This was a decrease of 814 compared to the June 2018 quarter.

A sanction is a reduction on a person's benefit that occurs if they do not fulfil their work obligations. Sanctions can affect benefit recipients in a number of ways, depending on their circumstances and the number of times they have had a graduated sanction over the last 12 months. There are three types of sanctions: graduated (i.e. percentage reduction in benefit amount), suspended, or cancelled.

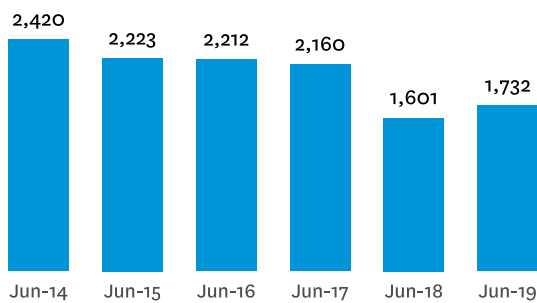
**Figure 10. The number of sanction for unfulfilled work obligations, by reason, in the June quarter, over the last six quarters**



The main reason for sanctions was due to a client not attending arranged appointments, 7,170 recipients had unfulfilled work obligations in the June 2019 quarter.

The maximum main benefit reduction for sole parents and couples with dependent children is 50 percent, when sanctioned within a 12-month period. For people without a de facto partner or couples with no dependent children, the first sanction is a maximum 50 percent reduction of their main benefit; for a second non-fulfilment of an obligation, they face a 100 percent suspension of their main benefit; and a third sanction will then result in a cancellation.

**Figure 11. The number of sanctions active as the end of June, for the last six quarters**

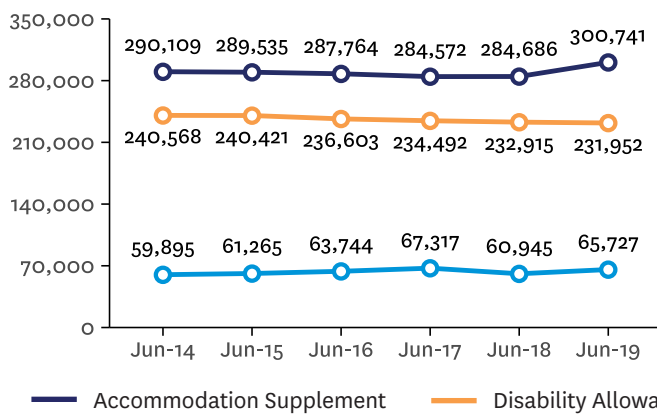


As at the end of June 2019, there were 1,732 sanctions that were actively in place.

Not everyone who does not fulfil their obligations gets sanctioned; if benefit recipients re-comply or provide additional information, the sanction can be withdrawn.

## Supplementary benefit assistance

**Figure 12. The number of recipients of supplementary assistance, at the end of June, for the last six quarters**



The number of people receiving the Accommodation Supplement in the June 2019 quarter was 300,741. This was an increase of 16,055 compared to the June 2018 quarter.

The number of people receiving Temporary Additional Support/Special Benefit increased by 4,782, compared to the end of June 2018, to 65,727 as at the end of June 2019.

The Accommodation Supplement is a weekly payment to assist people with low incomes with their rent, board, or the cost of owning a home, but not those in public housing or Income Related Rents. The number of people receiving an Accommodation Supplement tends to follow trends around broader benefit numbers.

The Disability Allowance is a weekly payment to assist people who have on-going costs because of a disability. A person does not need to be receiving a main benefit in order to qualify for the Disability Allowance. The number of people receiving a Disability Allowance tends to follow trends around broader benefit and New Zealand Superannuation numbers.

Temporary Additional Support is a weekly payment that helps people to cover essential living costs that cannot be met from their income and through other resources. A person does not have to be receiving a main benefit to qualify for Temporary Additional Support. Temporary Additional Support replaced the Special Benefit in 2006, however some people are still entitled to receive the Special Benefit, therefore these are counted together.

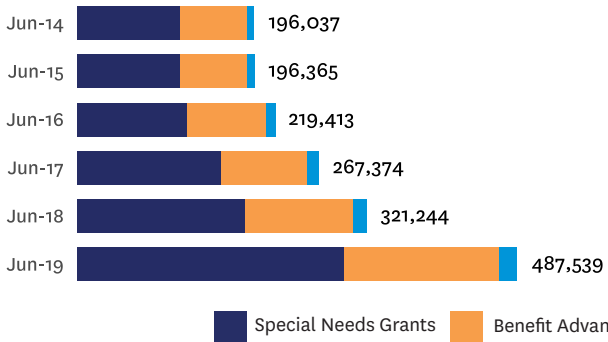


# Hardship assistance

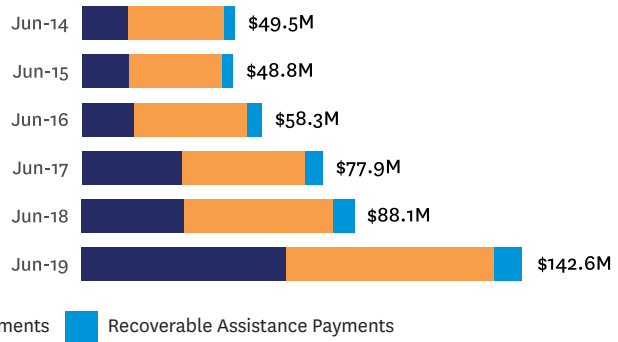
A total of **487,539 Hardship Assistance payments, worth \$142,581,224**, were granted in the June 2019 quarter. These figures are **higher** than in the June 2018 quarter, where 321,244 Hardship Assistance payments, worth \$88,129,108, were granted.

Hardship Assistance includes, but is not limited to: Special Needs Grants (SNGs), Benefit Advances (ADVs) and Recoverable Assistance Payments (RAPs). These forms of assistance are designed to help people who have immediate needs. The numbers reported for Hardship Assistance granted are sums of grants granted within the June quarter (i.e. 1 April to 30 June). Hardship Assistance contains all ages data, rather than working age (i.e. 18 to 64).

**Figure 13a. Number of hardship grants by type of hardship assistance, in the June quarter, over the last six quarters**



**Figure 13b. The value of hardship grants by type of hardship assistance, in the June quarter, over the last six quarters**

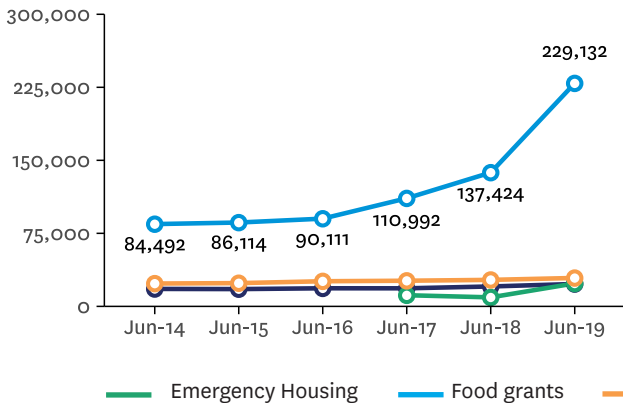


**487,539** payments granted in the June 2019 quarter

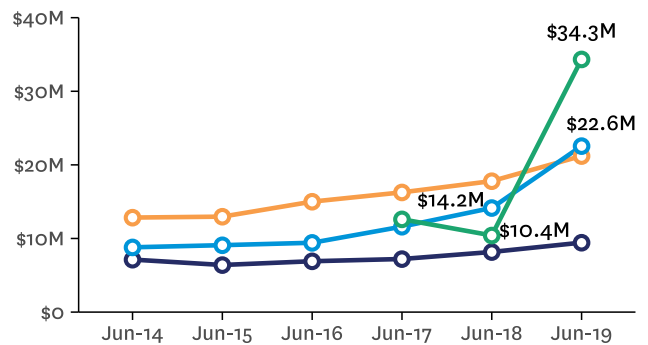
**\$142,584,226** was the value of grants provided in the June 2019 quarter

Reasons for hardship assistance, detailed below, include both Benefit Advance and Special Needs Grant reason categories. The Accommodation-related reasons are for Benefit Advance grants. Food grants, Medical-associated costs, and Emergency Housing reasons are for Special Needs Grants.

**Figure 14a. The number of hardship grants by selected reason, in the June quarter, over the last six quarters**



**Figure 14b. The value of hardship grants by selected reason, in the June quarter, over the last six quarters**

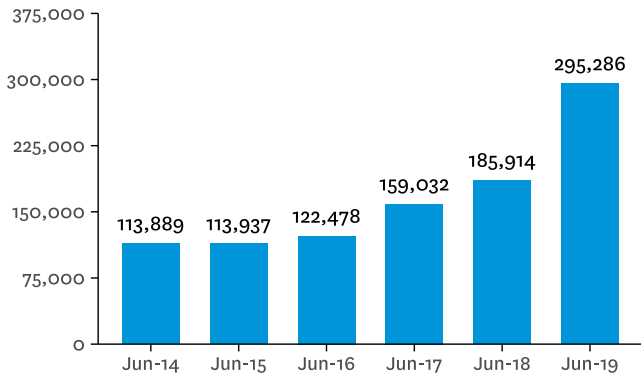


The number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (EH SNG) granted has increased. Compared to the June 2018 quarter, 14,329 more grants were granted, increasing to 23,574 in the June 2019 quarter. **The average value for each EH SNGs granted has increased from \$1,127 in the June 2018 quarter, to \$1,457 in the June 2019 quarter.** The total number of EH SNGs granted and the increasing average value has contributed to a higher total value of EH SNGs in the June 2019 quarter. **A total value of \$34,338,613 was granted for EH SNGs, an increase from \$10,414,939 in the June 2018 quarter, a 229.7 percent increase compared to June 2018.**

**The demand for Special Needs Grants (SNG) for food assistance continues to increase.** Compared to the June 2018 quarter there were 91,708 more SNGs for food granted, increasing to 229,132 in the June 2019 quarter. As a result the value of SNGs for food assistance increased to \$22,563,278 in the June 2019 quarter.

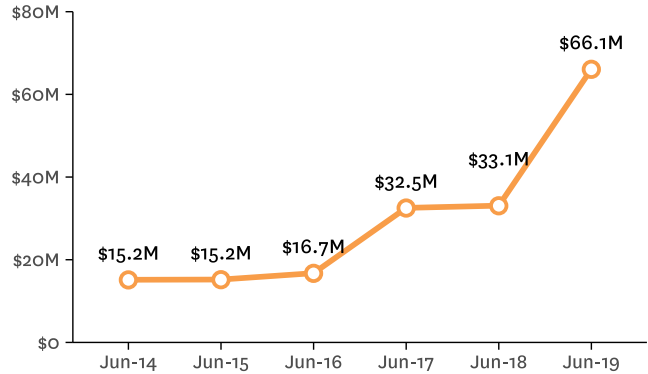
## Special Needs Grants (SNGs)

**Figure 15a. The number of Special Needs Grants granted, in the June quarter, over the last six quarters**



**295,286** Special Needs Grants granted in the June 2019 quarter

**Figure 15b. The total value of Special Needs Grants granted, in the June quarter, over the last six quarters**



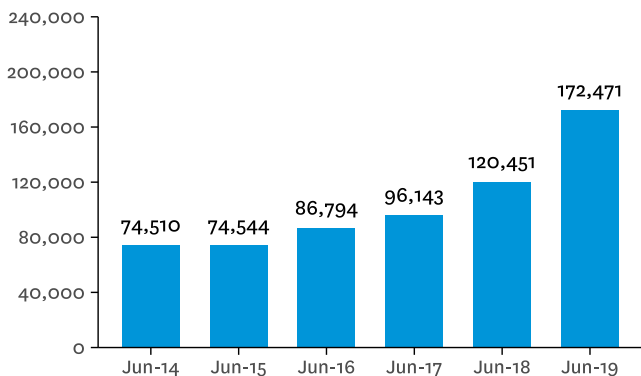
The number of Special Needs Grants granted was **109,372** higher in the **June 2019 quarter** compared to the June 2018 quarter. This has resulted in **the value of grants granted doubling**, increasing by \$33,014,229 to \$66,097,467, when compared to June 2018.

**\$66,097,467** was the value of Special Needs Grants granted in the June 2019 quarter

A Special Needs Grant provides non-taxable, one-off recoverable or non-recoverable financial assistance for people to meet immediate needs. A person does not need to be receiving a main benefit to be eligible for a Special Needs Grant.

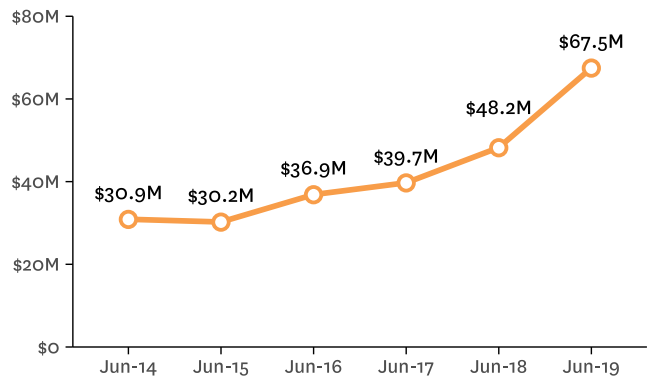
## Benefit Advances (ADVs)

**Figure 16a. The total number of Benefit Advances granted in the June quarter, over the last six quarters**



**172,471** Benefit Advances granted in the June 2019 quarter

**Figure 16b. The total value of Benefit Advances granted, in the June quarter, over the last six quarters**



The number of Benefit Advances granted were **52,020** higher in the **June 2019 quarter** compared to the June 2018 quarter. This has resulted in **the value of Benefit Advances granted increasing** by \$19,262,954 to \$67,495,906.

**\$67,495,906** was the value of Benefit Advances granted in the June 2019 quarter

All people receiving a main benefit and who require assistance to meet a particular immediate essential need can have access to an advance payment of their benefit up to six weeks of their net entitlement.