



Dear 

On 20 May 2019, you tweeted the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *Rules applying to domestic purposes beneficiaries between 1993 and 1998 for income earned such as wages and for board paid by lodgers.*

As you may know, from July 2013, several main benefits were replaced with three new benefit categories. This was part of several reforms to New Zealand's welfare system which were introduced by the Government of the time. These reforms aimed to create a welfare system that does not encourage people to remain on benefit longer than they have to, but to find and take up work, while continuing to provide a safety net and support for those who need it.

These benefit changes included the Domestic Purposes Benefit for sole parents with dependent children (DPB-SP), which generally became Jobseeker Support (JS) where the youngest child was aged 14 and over, or Sole Parent Support (SPS) where the youngest child was aged under 14 years. You can find more information about the range of welfare reforms here: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/regulatory-impact-statements/index.html

The rules and principles for entitlement to the various benefits paid by the Ministry are outlined in the Social Security Act 2018 (the Act). In general, these rules do not change substantially over the years. The Act is publicly available and can be accessed from the New Zealand Legislation website here:

www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1964/0136/365.0/DLM359107.html#DLM548744

4.
For your reference, the Act was replaced November 2018 and you can access the repealed legislation here:

www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1964/0136/365.0/DLM359107.html#DLM548744

4.
In addition to specific entitlement provisions for each of the core benefit types, there are some general aspects of entitlement, including an income test. If a beneficiary receives income, such as from wages, then the rate of benefit is reduced according to the abatement rules in the Act. Likewise, how the Ministry treats income and what is defined as income for benefit purpose is directed by the Act. The current guidelines for income are available on the Work and Income website here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/core-policy/income/index.html.

Prior to 1 July 1996, income over \$60 gross per week reduced the basic benefit entitlement. There was an annual income exemption of \$3,120. From 1 July 1996,

income over \$80 gross per week reduced the basic benefit entitlement, with an annual income exemption of \$4,160

Where a beneficiary receives money from boarders, the Ministry disregards the income received from the first two boarders. This is because the money being received is considered to be covering the housing costs of the boarder. Where there are more than two boarders, any money received from the third or subsequent boarders is considered income. Further details about this policy and how the income is assessed is available here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/accommodation-supplement/boarders-beneficiaries-01.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 shortly. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development'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 Domestic Purposes Benefits further 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.

Yours sincerely



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