



24 SEP 2019

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

On 31 July 2019 and 12 August 2019, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

This request relates to the Olive Tree Motel, 24 Glencoe Road, Browns Bay, Auckland. Can I please be provided with the following details:

1. *Type of arrangement held by MSD with this motel.*
2. *How much has been paid monthly from 1/4/2018 to 30/06/2019 by MSD?*
3. *Weekly amount currently paid for a unit by MSD.*
4. *How many MSD clients have stayed at the Motel?*
5. *Longest stay by a party.*
6. *Average stay by a party.*
7. *How many parties staying in the motel have had payments cancelled or withheld?*
8. *Copies of all correspondence between MSD and the Motel Operator.*
9. *Can you please advise the criteria that MSD apply when approving an authorised provider for a Special Needs Grant for Emergency Housing / Transitional Housing?*

In response to your first question, the Olive Tree Motel is an emergency housing supplier.

You requested the amount paid monthly from 1 April 2018 to 30 June 2019 by the Ministry to Olive Tree Motel. The Ministry does not pay accommodation suppliers such as Olive Tree Motel a weekly or monthly contracted amount. Rather, the Ministry pays Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (EH SNGs) directly to the accommodation provider on behalf of the client. This assistance is generally granted for up to seven nights but can be extended dependant on individual circumstances.

The EH SNG is available to people who cannot remain in their usual place or residence, if any, and do not have access to other accommodation which is adequate for them or their family's needs.

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You can find more information about emergency housing here: <http://housing.msd.govt.nz/housing-options/emergency-housing.html>

You have requested the weekly amount currently paid for a unit by the Ministry to Olive Tree Motel. Although the Ministry does not pay a "weekly amount" to Olive Tree Motel, the table below shows the number of EH SNGs, distinct clients and nights granted, and the amount granted to Olive Tree Motel during the period 1 April 2018 to 30 June 2019, broken down by quarter:

Quarter Ending	Olive Tree Motel & Apartment			
	Amount Granted	Distinct Clients	Number of Grants	Nights Granted
Jun 2018	\$142,610	20	80	547
Sep 2018	\$164,046	15	92	631
Dec 2018	\$193,803	18	98	675
Mar 2019	\$153,430	23	86	581
Jun 2019	\$161,950	28	92	610

Notes:

- This table includes clients of all ages and benefit types.
- A client can have more than one grant in the reporting period.
- This table only includes grants to this specific provider. Clients may have also had grants in the same reporting period to another provider.
- This table includes the amount granted. The total amount granted may not be the same as the actual amount spent.

You requested the number of Ministry clients who have stayed at Olive Tree Motel. The Ministry records EH SNGs against the record of the client who applies for the grant. For reporting purposes, the Ministry notes these applicants as distinct clients. However, the grants may be for accommodation to house either families or individuals. Where the grant includes housing for more than one person, any additional people are recorded on the applicants individual file.

In the table above, the total number of distinct clients over the five quarters reported will be higher than the actual number of distinct clients as a client may appear in more than one quarter. I can confirm that the total number of distinct clients granted EH SNGs which were paid to Olive Tree Motel between 1 April 2018 and 30 June 2019 is 77.

You requested the longest stay by a party. The Ministry has considered whether it can provide this information and notes that Olive Tree Motel is a small operation with eight units. The time period you have requested is also small. This information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act in order to protect the privacy of natural persons. The need to protect the privacy of this individual outweighs any public interest in this information.

You requested the average stay by a party. The Ministry grants EH SNGs up to seven nights. However sometimes the grant is for more than seven nights and sometimes clients do not utilise the accommodation for the number of nights granted, for example if other options become available. As such, the Ministry cannot accurately calculate the average stay by a party. This part of your request is refused under section 18(g) of the Official Information Act as the information you have requested is

not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation.

With regards to question seven, it would be highly unusual for an EH SNG to be cancelled after being granted. EH SNGs are paid directly to providers after the Ministry has assessed the eligibility of people requiring emergency housing. Where an EH SNG may no longer be required, for example when a person has found alternative accommodation, a refund is provided to the Ministry. Any record of the reconciliation of these payments would be held on individual client files.

In order to provide you with this information Ministry staff would have to manually review hundreds of files. As such I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced. If there is specific information you require, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

Your request for all correspondence between the Ministry and the Motel Operator is very broad as it would include business as usual activities around the granting of individual assistance, which represents a significant volume of correspondence over the period requested. Substantial manual collation would be required to locate and prepare all correspondence within the scope of your request.

As such I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

You requested criteria the Ministry applies when approving an authorised provider for Emergency Housing. To receive payments on behalf of clients, accommodation providers need to be registered Ministry suppliers.

Information about registering as a supplier is available here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/online-services/supplier-registration/index.html. Please note that in addition to the usual requirements for registration as a supplier, accommodation providers must provide proof of ownership or proof that they are authorised to act for the owner.

Further information for accommodation providers working with or wanting to work with the Ministry to help clients needing emergency housing is available at: <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/providers/housing-providers/index.html>.

Transitional Housing places are contracted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and are managed by specialists who are skilled in providing a range of social and tenancy-related support. Families and individuals stay in transitional housing for an average of 12 weeks or more. In most cases, they receive a further 12 weeks support once they've found a more permanent place to live.

The Ministry of Social Development's Regional Contract Managers manage contracts with transitional housing suppliers. Transitional Housing suppliers are registered as suppliers to Work and Income. This process includes providing evidence that the entity registering is the owner of the property or is authorised to act as the owner.

More information about transitional housing is available here: www.hud.govt.nz/community-and-public-housing/increasing-public-housing/transitional-housing/.

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 available to the wider public after ten working days. 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 this response regarding emergency housing at the Olive Tree Motel in Auckland 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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Hocking', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Karen Hocking
General Manager, Housing, Service Delivery