



18 NOV 2020

On 23 October 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

1. *How many businesses in Rotorua and Tauranga (figure per city) received the first round of the COVID-19 Wage Subsidy?*
2. *How many businesses in Rotorua and Tauranga applied for the COVID-19 Wage Subsidy Extension and how many were approved?*
3. *Can you please provide a monetary figure for how much Wage Subsidy was given in Rotorua and Tauranga (sum per city)?*
4. *If possible, could you please provide a breakdown of what kinds of businesses accessed the Wage Subsidy (sector - e.g. tourism, hospitality etc... - and type - SME etc...)?*
5. *Have any businesses been required to or offered to pay back the Wage Subsidy? If yes, how much has been repaid or is required to be repaid?*

I will respond to your questions in turn.

The Ministry is unable to provide the data requested in **questions one, two and three** of your request. Employers applying for the Wage Subsidy were required to provide the Ministry with a business address. However, a significant number of businesses have headquarters in big cities such as Auckland. Therefore, a disproportionate number of businesses that applied for the Wage Subsidy come under 'Auckland' or other big cities in the Ministry's data pool, although they may (solely) operate in other places. The Ministry, therefore, cannot compile a sound data table for businesses operating in a certain place at this time, and any data provided may potentially be misleading.

Furthermore, addresses provided by applicants cannot automatically be verified by the Ministry's systems as address data was saved in the Ministry's IT system as a text string and not as part of an electronic form which may have allowed for automated address localisation and verification. Therefore, it is possible that some applicants, including applicants from Rotorua or Tauranga, provided incomplete address data.

I am, therefore, refusing questions one, two and three of your request under section 18(g) of the 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.

However, the Ministry has conducted further research regarding the number of unique jobs that were supported by the Wage Subsidy, broken down by region. This data is based on employees' places of residence and not the business address. I am advised that the Ministry recently provided you with this information. The information can be found on pages five and six of the PDF document available at the following weblink: [www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/covid-19/who-was-supported-by-the-wage-subsidy-and-extension-24-july-2020.pdf](http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/covid-19/who-was-supported-by-the-wage-subsidy-and-extension-24-july-2020.pdf).

Regarding **question four** of your request, the Ministry can provide you with a national industry breakdown of businesses that have received the Wage Subsidy. This information can be found on page five in the PDF document linked above.

The Ministry is unable to break this information down to the regional or Territorial Local Authority (TLA) level as the Ministry does not hold that level of information. The data that has been used to compile national level information was taken from the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) which is managed by Statistics New Zealand, and tax data was supplied by Inland Revenue to create this information. In order to provide you with the breakdown requested, the Ministry would have to request new data from these agencies and create new information. This is not an obligation under the Act.

Your request for a breakdown of Wage Subsidy recipients, by industry and TLA, is, therefore, refused under section 18(g) of the 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.

Regarding **question five** of your request, the Ministry is unable to provide you with regional data for the reasons specified in our response to questions one, two and three.

However, on a national level, I can confirm that as at 23 October 2020, 19,090 repayments were requested from businesses/sole traders with a total value of \$519.3 million. As at 23 October 2020, 16,629 businesses/sole traders had made repayments, with a total value of \$496 million.

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
- 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 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 with us, please feel free to contact [OIA\\_Requests@msd.govt.nz](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding businesses in Rotorua und Tauranga that received the Wage Subsidy, 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



<sup>pp</sup> Bridget Saunders  
**Manager, Issue Resolution  
Service Delivery**