



24 SEP 2020

Dear

On 2 September 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *The number of Indian origin residents/citizens getting the Covid-19 income relief payment.*
- *The number of Indian origin residents/citizens receiving the Wage Subsidy or the Wage Subsidy Extension.*

The COVID-19 Income Relief Payment (CIRP) provides temporary financial support to clients who have lost employment due to the impacts of COVID-19. A client may be entitled to receive the CIRP if they:

- are 18 years old or over, or a financially independent 16- or 17-year-old
- have lost their last qualifying employment from 1 March 2020 to 30 October 2020 (inclusive) because of the impacts of COVID-19
- have no current employment
- be a New Zealand citizen or hold a residence class visa
- be ordinarily resident in New Zealand
- have a partner, and their partner earns less than \$2,000 a week in wages or salary, before tax.

The CIRP is paid for a maximum of 12 weeks to help clients with living costs after sudden job loss, and to give them time to find other work. Clients cannot get the CIRP when they or their partner are receiving a main benefit. However, if they are eligible, they can choose which payment option is most appropriate for their situation.

Further information regarding the CIRP is also available on Work and Income's website: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/covid-19/income-relief-payment/index.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/covid-19/income-relief-payment/index.html).

In regard to the first part of your request, please find the table overleaf which outlines the number of recipients of the CIRP who identify as being of Indian ethnicity.

**COVID-19 Income Relief Payment recipients of Indian ethnicity and total recipients as at 31 July 2020.**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Recipients</b>
Indian	743
<b>All ethnicities</b>	<b>20,957</b>

Notes for table:

- Please note the ethnicity classification that is used to construct this table does not necessarily align with the current Statistics New Zealand classification of ethnicity. Ethnicity details recorded by the Ministry have been gathered under a variety of classification methods as clients come into contact with the Ministry. The ethnicity data may be self-identified based on an individual's preference or self-construct.
- While the Ministry collects multiple ethnicities from clients, the Ministry only reports on a unique form of 'prioritised' ethnicity for core benefit data (one ethnic group per person with Māori coming first, Pacific groups second followed by other groups ending with NZ European).

The Ministry is unable to determine the number of people who have received the Wage Subsidy or Wage Subsidy Extension who identify as Indian ethnicity. This is because, Wage Subsidy applications do not require applicants to provide ethnicity details for themselves or their employees.

As such, your request for the number Wage Subsidy recipients who are of Indian ethnicity is refused under section 18(g) of the Act. 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.

The Ministry has reported on some specific ethnicity data in a report titled "*Who received the Wage Subsidy and Wage Subsidy Extension?*" and understands that you were provided a copy of this report from the Media team on 2 September 2020.

The reason this report was able to identify some of the ethnic breakdowns of Wage Subsidy recipients is because the Ministry worked with various agencies who provided anonymised information from the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) to supplement its own data base. This enabled the Ministry to create a more complete understanding of who received support by age, sex, ethnic group, industry and region.

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. 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 the number of people who identify as being of Indian ethnicity who have received the CIRP and 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bridget Saunders', with a small mark to the right.

Bridget Saunders  
**Manager**  
**Issue Resolution, Service Delivery**