



16 APR 2021

On 18 March 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development's (the Ministry) media team requesting the following information for the purposes of a story you are writing:

- *How many MSD clients are currently being housed in student accommodation around the country?*
- *And which education institutes are involved, where they are and how many MSD clients are housed in each?*
- *How many children are involved?*
- *Could you outline the arrangement MSD has with these accommodation providers and tell me what happens when international students return to the country ie where will the MSD clients go?*

You were advised on 19 March 2021 that your questions were most appropriately responded to under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) and your request was forwarded to the relevant team for response.

As you are already aware, the Ministry can confirm one student accommodation provider is currently being used for Emergency Housing (EH) in Taranaki. The Pacific International Hotel Management School's student accommodation is currently being used to house Ministry clients in receipt of the Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant.

However, the Ministry is unable to discern all student accommodation being used for EH from other accommodation types as the Ministry does not record or distinguish the type of EH accommodation to this level of detail. The registered supplier name is the name of the parent company of the accommodation supplier, and not necessarily the name of the accommodation itself. For example, the parent company name of the accommodation supplier may show an academic institution, such as Victoria University of Wellington, however, this is not indicative of student accommodation being used for EH.

Furthermore, one registered supplier may provide accommodation across multiple premises in different locations or trading names, receiving payment through the single supplier record. Payment for the premises go directly to the supplier, of which the Ministry does not hold all the addresses of all the properties used by the supplier for EH. When a client requires emergency housing, the Ministry pays the supplier directly (on the client's behalf) and the suppliers assists the client into the property.

accommodation, Ministry staff would need to manually review every registered suppliers file as this information, where held, would be held in the notes of these files. In addition, I note that this information would not necessarily be held for every supplier and manual inspection of these files would likely result in incomplete information. As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act as it would require substantial manual collation. 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.

In regard to your question about the arrangement between the Ministry and our suppliers, and where Ministry clients would go when international students return, clients are placed in EH pending availability. As such, if a student accommodation was being used for EH and there was no longer room available for Ministry clients, the accommodation would be ruled out and the client would be assisted by a supplier of a property with available rooms.

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. 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.

If you are not satisfied with this response to your request for student accommodation being used for emergency housing, 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.

Ngā mihi nui



Karen Hocking
**General Manager,
Housing**