



19 APR 2021

Dear

On 18 March 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *Please send any meeting notes and communications you may have had discussing the change of Porirua to Area 1 (for the purposes of calculating Accommodation Supplement - it is currently Area 2 despite high rents).*
- *Please include any documentation that shows the estimated increase in social housing costs (excluding emergency housing) that are expected in the Porirua region for the next two years.*

On 7 April 2021, the Ministry transferred question two of your request to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) under section 14 of the Act, as this information is not held by the Ministry and is believed to be held by HUD.

The Ministry will now provide a response to the following question:

- *Please send any meeting notes and communications you may have had discussing the change of Porirua to Area 1 (for the purposes of calculating Accommodation Supplement - it is currently Area 2 despite high rents).*

The Accommodation Supplement (AS) is a non-taxable benefit that provides assistance towards a client's accommodation costs. This assistance can be paid with a main benefit or as a stand-alone supplement as a non-beneficiary. AS can also be paid for periods where a client is in study or not studying and can be assessed at a manual rate depending on the client's circumstances. More information on AS can be found on the Ministry's website here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/accommodation-supplement.html.

The AS may be adjusted by the government from time to time and was last adjusted in April 2018 as part of the Government's Families Package. Since this time, the Ministry has not provided any advice, including meeting notes and communications, relating to adjusting the AS areas, including Porirua. As such, your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

However, within the Ministry, modelling work was undertaken in 2020 by the Forecasting and Costing team on re-allocating AS regions using updated rent data. This work showed that if the AS areas were adjusted based on tenancy bond data from July 2019 to June 2020, the "Porirua zone" would fall into AS area 1 (using lower-quartile rents which is how AS areas are currently ranked).

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

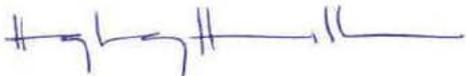
- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

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.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding Accommodation Area Zoning, 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



Hayley Hamilton
General Manager
Employment and Housing