



Tēnā koe

On 11 October 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *Statistics about how many children (if any) are in emergency housing in Tairāwhiti*
- *How does this compare to other areas in New Zealand?*
- *What is MSD's comment about the growing housing crisis?*
- *If more children living in motels in Tairāwhiti/Gisborne – what does MSD think is the reason?*

On 9 November 2021, the Ministry advised you that more time was required to respond to your request.

Demand for housing across New Zealand is growing and more people are experiencing a severe and immediate need. This demand is generated by a shortage of affordable housing driving up house prices and rents. People on low incomes are most affected by rising housing costs and many seek financial help through the Ministry. Tairāwhiti is experiencing the same growth in demand as the rest of the country.

The Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (EH SNG) is available to people who cannot remain in their usual place of residence, if any, and do not have access to other accommodation which is adequate for them or their family's needs. The Ministry pays EH SNGs directly to the accommodation supplier and assistance is generally granted for up to seven nights but can be extended dependant on individual circumstances.

After these seven nights, Work and Income arrange another appointment with the client to discuss their housing situation and if another grant is required. The Ministry works hard to support people in emergency housing to secure a long-term housing solution, either through public housing or private rental accommodation. Other options including transitional housing can also be explored as an option depending on availability and the individual's circumstances.

When a client applies for an EH SNG, MSD records the household make up including the number of children. In some cases, children may have alternative or alternating living arrangements and may not necessarily be living in Emergency Housing for the entire duration. Children may also be counted more than once, as MSD is unable to verify if the child/children are included in more than one household living in Emergency Housing.

The Ministry recognises that motels are not a long-term solution or the solution that we want to deliver for people who are potentially in a vulnerable situation. They provide a short-term solution while more sustainable options are progressed. More information about EH SNGs is available at the following link:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/emergency-housing.html

Some people may struggle to access suitable housing due to a lack of available supply or they simply may not be able to meet the high cost of housing which may result in them receiving EH SNG support for an extended period of time. Please note that the Ministry does not hold any contracts or official agreements or arrangements with any emergency housing provider.

There is also a distinct group of people that face a range of complex issues that are a barrier, such as mental health and addictions, criminal history, or family violence. There are still others that need to live in a specific area, due to the need to access specialist care or educational needs for them or their family.

For people with high and complex needs, it can sometimes be challenging to identify suitable long-term housing, which can lead to longer stays in emergency housing. Work and Income works closely with these people to see what can be done to ensure that once they have a home of their own, they have the skills to sustain it, and the support they need to keep it.

There has been a growing demand nationally for emergency housing, as the shortage of affordable housing and rising rents continues to impact low-income whānau, particularly those who are beneficiaries. The year 2020 saw a significant increase in demand for emergency housing, as the Ministry supported people through the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, people also could not easily move out of Emergency Housing into long-term accommodation, which contributed to longer durations of stays and higher costs.

Please see **Table One** in **Appendix A** which shows the number of clients and children who were in receipt of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants as at 30 September 2021.

You will note that the number of children in Emergency Housing in Tairāwhiti is higher when compared to other regions. This is due a combination of factors including low supply and affordability in the private rental market, limited supply of Transitional Housing in the area which does not currently meet demand and low public housing stock in Tairāwhiti. All of these factors have resulted in longer wait times on the register and more people requiring Emergency Housing.

The Ministry is taking active steps to resolve the situation. For example, the Ministry contributes to the Manaaki Tairāwhiti group which includes Iwi, central and local government leaders. This group aims to identify community housing needs in the

Tairāwhiti area using a place-based approach housing response. Further information on this group is available from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Tairāwhiti is a priority area for public housing because it has been identified as an area with housing deprivation and work is underway to increase supply. In the last two years, HUD have delivered over 20 homes, and around 70 new public homes are currently in the pipeline. These are homes that are either under construction, contract or feasibility stages of development. They will provide warm, dry and healthy homes for Tairāwhiti whānau and their tamariki to live well. Under the Government's Public Housing Plan, around 170 additional public housing places are expected to have been delivered in Tairāwhiti by 2024. Nationally, over 18,000 extra public housing places are expected to be delivered by 2024. This is in addition to public housing activity by Iwi, community providers and private developers across our rohe.

HUD has also funded a project (in partnership with Te Puni Kōkiri) with Te Aitanga a Mahaki Trust to deliver an iwi social housing project on four project sites in Gisborne. The \$1.38m of funding was from the He Kūkū Ki Te Kāinga Fund, which was set up to contribute to increasing housing supply projects. Additionally, HUD has developed the Whai Kāinga, Whai Oranga investment programme alongside Iwi in Tairāwhiti. Eligible iwi partners in Tairāwhiti can apply for Whai Kāinga, Whai Oranga investment. Whai Kāinga Whai Oranga will see delivery of approximately 1000 new homes, repairs to 700 homes, 2700 additional infrastructure enabled sites and an additional \$30m investment to support the Māori housing sector capability. That means funding for additional investment in small scale Māori housing projects including papakāinga, and for additional repairs as well as sector capability funding, and larger scale Māori Housing Supply projects. Applications to the Whai Kāinga, Whai Oranga opened on 20, October 2021, to provide \$730 million of investment and support for Māori to determine their own housing solutions.

The Government takes a deliberate, place-based and MAIHI approach in Tairāwhiti to work with communities and invest in collaborative planning to develop and implement joined-up housing solutions. The Government is partnering with Iwi, Māori, private sector and NGOs to support the delivery of housing aspirations, improving housing quality and supporting Māori housing on Māori land.

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 and attachments on the Ministry'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 emergency housing in Tairāwhiti, 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

Appendix A

Table One: The number of clients and children who were in receipt of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants as at 30 September 2021

Territorial authority	Number of households	Households with children	Number of children
ASHBURTON DISTRICT	15	12	18
AUCKLAND SUPER CITY	1,392	672	1,422
BULLER DISTRICT	9	S	12
CARTERTON DISTRICT	S	S	S
CENTRAL HAWKE'S BAY DISTRICT	21	15	30
CENTRAL OTAGO DISTRICT	S	S	S
CHRISTCHURCH CITY	249	102	189
DUNEDIN CITY	12	9	15
FAR NORTH DISTRICT	21	12	30
GISBORNE DISTRICT	114	69	144
GORE DISTRICT	S	S	S
GREY DISTRICT	27	9	24
HAMILTON CITY	630	351	708
HASTINGS DISTRICT	105	45	105
HAURAKI DISTRICT	15	6	12
HOROWHENUA DISTRICT	48	15	24
INVERCARGILL CITY	9	9	9
KAPITI COAST DISTRICT	42	18	39
KAWERAU DISTRICT	27	12	24
LOWER HUTT CITY	96	36	72
MANAWATU DISTRICT	12	9	18
MARLBOROUGH DISTRICT	33	15	27
MASTERTON DISTRICT	36	12	24
MATAMATA-PIAKO DISTRICT	15	12	27
NAPIER CITY	180	93	189
NELSON CITY	33	21	54
NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT	45	33	60
OPOTIKI DISTRICT	21	18	33
OTOROHANGA DISTRICT	S	S	9
PALMERSTON NORTH CITY	174	81	162
PORIRUA CITY	69	30	51
RANGITIKEI DISTRICT	S	S	S
ROTORUA DISTRICT	327	81	147
RUAPEHU DISTRICT	12	6	18
SELWYN DISTRICT	S	0	0
SOUTH TARANAKI DISTRICT	9	S	S

Territorial authority	Number of households	Households with children	Number of children
SOUTH WAIKATO DISTRICT	30	15	42
SOUTH WAIRARAPA DISTRICT	S	0	0
STRATFORD DISTRICT	S	S	6
TARARUA DISTRICT	9	S	S
TASMAN DISTRICT	9	6	12
TAUPO DISTRICT	114	51	90
TAURANGA CITY	177	108	213
THAMES-COROMANDEL DISTRICT	9	6	9
TIMARU DISTRICT	9	6	12
UPPER HUTT CITY	30	12	27
WAIKATO DISTRICT	21	15	33
WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT	S	S	S
WAIPA DISTRICT	30	18	27
WAIROA DISTRICT	18	9	18
WAITAKI DISTRICT	S	S	S
WAITOMO DISTRICT	S	S	S
WELLINGTON CITY	360	84	138
WESTERN BAY OF PLENTY DISTRICT	21	12	21
WESTLAND DISTRICT	S	S	S
WHAKATANE DISTRICT	24	15	24
WHANGANUI DISTRICT	12	6	12
WHANGAREI DISTRICT	63	48	93
UNKNOWN/OTHER	9	S	12
NATIONAL TOTAL	4,776	2,259	4,509

Notes:

- EH SNG is Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant.
- This data only includes EH SNGs where the payment was made on or before 30 September 2021.
- Territorial Authority is based on the clients address and may not be reflective of where their Emergency Housing is located.
- Ungeocoded address records that are unable to be matched to a Territorial Authority through suburb and city details have an unknown Territorial Authority.
- The number of households is the number of distinct clients who were granted an EH SNG.
- Household composition is based on the declared adults and children in each Emergency Housing application and may not be reflective of their actual family size.
- The number of children is declared at the time of each individual EH SNG.

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- When a client applies for an EH SNG, MSD records the household make up including the number of children.
 - In some cases, children may have alternative or alternating living arrangements and may not necessarily be living in Emergency Housing for the entire duration in Emergency Housing.
 - Children may also be counted more than once, as MSD is unable to verify if the child/children are included in more than one household living in Emergency Housing.
 - To protect confidentiality the Ministry of Social Development uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data.
 - These data tables have had random rounding to base three applied to all cell counts in the table.
 - A value of one or two may be rounded to zero or three.
 - The impact of applying random rounding is that columns and rows may not add exactly to the given column or row totals.
 - The published counts will never differ by more than two counts.
 - In certain circumstances low numbers may potentially lead to individuals being identified.
 - Due to these privacy concerns, numbers for some categories of clients have been suppressed or aggregated.
 - Secondary suppression rules have also been applied when required.
 - Suppressed numbers have been replaced by an 'S'.

