



8 December 2021

Tēnā koe

On 15 November 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information regarding the impact of COVID-19 on Ōtara, South Auckland:

- 1. Provide any information or statistics on the numbers of Wage Subsidy, Covid Resurgence, Emergency Packages, Short Term Absence and Leave Support applications in Ōtara since the Covid-19 outbreak began in March 2020.*
- 2. How do numbers for the suburb of Ōtara compare to the rest of Aotearoa?*
- 3. Are application numbers higher in any other suburb?*
- 4. Can you please also provide numbers of people on the jobseekers benefit in Ōtara in February 2020 through to today 15th November 2021*

On 16 November 2021 and 18 November 2021, the Ministry contacted you to clarify your request. Based on this, The Ministry has interpreted 'emergency packages' as referring to the Community Food Response Grant Fund.

On 18 November 2021, the COVID-19 Resurgence Support Payment (RSP) aspect of your request, for question one, two and three was transferred in part from the Ministry to the Inland Revenue Department (IRD) for response. This is because this information was more closely related to their functions and responsibilities. You can expect to receive a response from IRD in response to the RSP aspect of your request in due course.

The Wage Subsidy Scheme, Leave Support Scheme and Short-Term Absence Payment has enabled rapid support for thousands of New Zealand businesses during this time of uncertainty and has ensured that employees are able to remain connected with their employers during the COVID-19 lockdown. The scheme has been set up on a high-trust model in order to quickly deliver funds to support workers, families and businesses.

More information about the support available for individuals, families, employers and self-employed people affected by COVID-19 can be found online at the following link: <https://workandincome.govt.nz/covid-19/index.html>.

The Community Food Response Grant Fund (Response Fund) provides contributory support over two years to meet increased demand due to the economic shocks caused by COVID-19, while developing longer term plans for food secure communities. Applications opened on 29 May 2020 and closed at 11.59pm on 5 July 2020.

The Ministry received 145 applications of which, 131 organisations were approved funding totalling \$19.6m over two years. A list of the successful applications can be found on the Ministry's website at the following link: www.msd.govt.nz/documents/what-we-can-do/community/food-secure-communities/successful-applicants-cfrgf.pdf.

In regard to questions one, two and three for the Wage Subsidy Scheme, Leave Support Scheme and Short-Term Absence Payment applications, due to the way the information is held the Ministry is not able to easily identify which applications were made in Ōtara. 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 the numbers and comparative data for Wage Subsidy applications, by suburb, 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.

In regard to question four, this information is refused under section 18(d) of the Act on the basis that the information requested is publicly available. Please refer to the benefits fact sheets - Auckland board data tables. This information can be found online at the following link: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/benefit/index.html.

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'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 Information on Wage Subsidy Scheme, Leave Support Scheme and Short-Term Absence Payment statistics in Ōtara, 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

Bridget Saunders

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