



Tēnā koe

On 6 August 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- 1. How many people are in emergency motel accommodation in Takapuna as at 1 July 21. Of those, how many of these people have gang affiliations and How many have a previous criminal conviction?*
- 2. How many motel rooms do these people occupy across how many sites?*
- 3. What is the cost per week of the emergency motel accommodation in Takapuna?*
- 4. How many transitional houses are there on Auckland's north shore?*
- 5. Any Plans, if any, are there in the next six months to have any transitional housing acquired on Auckland's north Shore?*
- 6. How much has been spent to repair motel accommodation damaged as a result of use as emergency accommodation in 2020/21?*

On 16 August 2021, the Ministry advised you that question four and five of your request was transferred to Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as the information is more closely connected with the functions of HUD.

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.

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.

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

For the sake of clarity, I will answer your questions in turn. Where appropriate, I have combined the answers to some questions.

1. *How many people are in emergency motel accommodation in Takapuna as at 1 July 21. Of those, how many of these people have gang affiliations and How many have a previous criminal conviction?*
2. *How many motel rooms do these people occupy across how many sites?*
3. *What is the cost per week of the emergency motel accommodation in Takapuna?*

The lowest geographical boundary the Ministry reports on for clients receiving EH SNGs is Territorial Local Authority (TLA). The Ministry records the addresses of recipients at a local level; however, this information is kept on individual client records and is not part of the Ministry's standard reporting. Therefore, I am refusing your request for information relating to Takapuna under section 18(f) of the Act. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

In the spirit of being helpful, the Ministry has provided you with **Table One** which shows the number of EH SNGs granted in Auckland Super City during the period 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021, broken down by the number of grants, the number of distinct clients, the amount granted, the number of nights granted and the number of providers that received at least one grant in the quarter. Please find this table enclosed in **Appendix A**.

The Ministry is unable to provide you with any information on the conduct of those in Emergency Housing as the Ministry does not necessarily hold information about clients' criminal histories, or gang affiliations. If this information is held, it would be held in notes on individual case files, and in order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files, and is therefore refused under section 18(f) of the Act.

The Ministry is unable to provide you with the amounts paid to Emergency Housing providers per week, per room as different clients and households receive different rates depending on the size of the accommodation/ room required and how soon the room is needed.

This information is recorded in notes on individual case files. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files. As such, this part of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

The Ministry has 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.

6. *How much has been spent to repair motel accommodation damaged as a result of use as emergency accommodation in 2020/21?*

The Ministry expects our clients to get the same quality of service as any other guest, and that our clients observe the rules and conditions of the accommodation supplier. A security deposit is available to suppliers to contribute to any damage costs, beyond

normal wear and tear. Damages or losses are charged to the client and they are required to pay it back to the Ministry at an agreed rate.

Where a client or motelier has concerns around the quality and/or service of a motel, including behaviour of clients, the Ministry's regional housing team address these issues at the time directly with the motelier.

In regard to question six of your request, damages to properties are classified and paid out as 'other emergency grants'. The Ministry cannot disaggregate payments regarding property damage or loss from other types of assistance granted under the 'other emergency grants' category. In order to provide you with this information Ministry staff would have to review thousands of individual files. As such, this part of your request is also refused under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

More information about 'other emergency grants' can be found at the following link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/other-emergency-grants-01.html.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to response to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. The Ministry has concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

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. If you are not satisfied with this response Emergency Housing in Takapuna and Auckland's North Shore, 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

PP. 

Karen Hocking
**General Manager
Housing**

Appendix A

Table One. The number of EH SNGs granted in Auckland Super City during the period 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021, broken down by the number of grants, the number of distinct clients, the amount granted, the number of nights granted and the number of providers that received at least one grant in the quarter.

Quarter	June 2021
Grants	12,303
Distinct Clients	2,469
Amount Granted	\$26,320,463.25
Nights	105,100
Providers	170

Notes:

- Emergency Housing assistance payments are granted as Special Needs Grants.
- The number of Grants is not the same as the number of people. A person may have more than one grant within a period.
- TLA is estimated based on the clients address at the time of the grant. It may not be the same as the address of the emergency housing provider.
- One registered supplier may provide accommodation across multiple premises with different trading names receiving payment through the single supplier record.
- Note that one Provider may serve clients from several different TLAs in the geographical area around them.
- To protect confidentiality the Ministry 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.
- 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.