



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

7 June 2022

Tēnā koe

On 30 March 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *We request the amount paid in accommodation supplements to:*
  1. *Renters and boarders annually from 2019 to the most recent data available;*
  2. *The number of landlords with tenants receiving the Accommodation Supplement annually from 2019 to the most recent data available;*
  3. *A breakdown by ethnicity of those receiving Accommodation Supplement annually from 2019 to the most recent data available.*

On 2 May 2022, the Ministry informed you that due to the large quantity of information within the scope of your request, and it will take longer than the 20 working-day time limit to collate the material you have requested and assess whether any interest might be prejudiced by its release, in accordance with section 15(1) and 15A of the Act. You were advised that a decision would be with you on or before 9 June 2022.

An Accommodation Supplement (AS) is a non-taxable benefit that provides assistance towards a client's accommodation costs. A person does not have to be getting a benefit to qualify for AS, however they must meet an income and asset test. More information on the AS can be found on this link: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/accommodation-supplement/index.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/accommodation-supplement/index.html).

The Ministry will answer your questions in turn for clarity.

1. *Amount paid in Accommodation Supplements to renters and boarders annually from 2019 to the most recent data available:*

Please see **Table One** below, which shows the total number of clients who received Accommodation Supplement, broken down by whether they were renting or boarding, as at the month end of December 2019, 2020, 2021 and March 2022, and the total amount of weekly Accommodation Supplement paid.

**Table One: The total number of renters and boarders who received Accommodation Supplement and amount paid to clients as at the year ending December 2019, 2020, 2021 and March 2022:**

As at month end	Renting	Boarding	Total Renting and Boarding	Total Weekly AS amount
<b>December 2019</b>	214,662	71,301	<b>285,963</b>	<b>\$28,204,879.92</b>
<b>December 2020</b>	255,768	82,452	<b>338,220</b>	<b>\$33,718,917.59</b>
<b>December 2021</b>	254,127	70,533	<b>324,660</b>	<b>\$33,852,183.88</b>
<b>March 2022</b>	245,790	64,524	<b>310,317</b>	<b>\$32,410,836.02</b>

**Notes:**

- AS is Accommodation Supplement.
- AS is paid weekly for rent, mortgage, or board costs.
- The table shows the snapshot of the month selected, the total of the clients and amount of weekly AS paid as at the month end.
- The number of recipients of AS is the number of individuals, couples or families receiving an AS for their housing purposes.
- It is not necessarily a count of households.
- The total figure only counts clients who received AS as at the month ending December 2019, 2020, 2021 and March 2022.
- 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 2 counts.

2. *The number of landlords with tenants receiving the Accommodation Supplement annually from 2019 to the most recent data available;*

In regard to question two of your request, I am unable to provide you with this information. The Ministry does not centrally record information on which landlords receive rent payments from tenants in receipt of Accommodation Supplement. If this information was held, it would be on individual case files. In order to provide you with this information Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files. As such, I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability for charge for the information requested. I have

concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

3. *A breakdown by ethnicity of those receiving Accommodation Supplement annually from 2019 to the most recent data available:*

Please see **Table Two** below, which shows the total number of AS grants paid to clients, broken down by ethnicity, as at the months end of December 2019, 2020, 2021 and March 2022.

**Table Two: The total number of Accommodation Supplement grants paid to clients by ethnicity as at the year ending December 2019, 2020, 2021 and March 2022.**

As at month end	Māori	European	Pasifika	Asian	MELAA	Other	Unspecified	Distinct Total Clients
<b>December 2019</b>	99,597	174,348	28,485	27,297	4,662	8,799	12,885	<b>319,566</b>
<b>December 2020</b>	116,952	202,329	36,336	33,207	5,535	11,895	17,196	<b>378,129</b>
<b>December 2021</b>	112,284	194,541	35,067	32,061	5,262	11,829	16,524	<b>362,877</b>
<b>March 2022</b>	107,328	186,312	33,663	30,354	4,923	11,214	15,999	<b>347,670</b>

**Notes:**

- The number of recipients of AS in Table Two includes all clients who are renting, boarding and own their home.
- Ethnicity data is self-identified, and multiple ethnicities may be chosen by an individual as fits their preference or self-concept.
- Category 'Other' is where a client's chosen ethnicity is not one of the ethnicities that is grouped above.
- Category 'Unspecified' is where the client has opted not to supply their ethnicity.
- Total response ethnicity means that if a person identifies with more than one ethnic group, they are counted in each applicable group.
- Because a client can choose more than one ethnic response, the total percentage of ethnic responses will be greater than one hundred percent.
- The Ministry is in the process of changing our reporting to total response, so ethnicity results may differ from previous or other reporting.
- MELAA refers to Middle Eastern, Latin American, and African.

The principles and purposes of the Act 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](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response, 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

*Bridget Saunders*

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**Manager, Issue Resolution  
Service Delivery**