



2 November 2022

Tēnā koe

On 6 October 2022, your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) was transferred in part from the Office of the Minister for Social Development and Employment to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry). You requested the following information:

- *The ethnicity of clients granted one or more Emergency Housing Special Need Grant (EHSNG), for each of the June 2022, March 2022 and December 2021 quarters. Total numbers and by region;*
- *Of the \$97.3 million granted for EHSNG in the June 2022 quarter, how much was spent;*
- *The amount of EHSNG granted, by type of accommodation funded (campsite/holiday parks, motel/hotel, hostel, shelter, ect), total and by ethnicity and/or region, for each of the June 2022, March 2022 and December 2021 quarters;*
- *The amount of EHSNG granted that is recoverable or non-recoverable, total, and by ethnicity and/or region for each of the June 2022, March 2022 and December 2021 quarters;*
- *The average EHSNG granted per distinct client, by ethnicity and/or region for each of the June 2022, March 2022 and December 2021 quarters;*

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.

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 and private rental accommodation. Other options including transitional housing can also be explored as an option depending on availability and the individual's 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](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/emergency-housing.html).

I will respond to each part of your request in turn:

- *The ethnicity of clients granted one or more Emergency Housing Special Need Grant (EHSNG), for each of the June 2022, March 2022 and December 2021 quarters. Total numbers and by region;*

Please find attached **Appendix One** containing **Table One** showing the number of distinct clients granted one or more EH SNG nationally from 1 October 2021 to 30 June 2022 broken down by ethnicity and the Territorial Location Authority (TLA) of a client's registered address.

Please note that the TLA is estimated based on the clients' address at the time of the grant. This TLA may not be the same as the address of the emergency housing supplier. Where the client address is not recorded, the location of the Ministry's service centre case managing the client has been used to approximate which TLA a client resides in. However, as the Ministry has switched to working from national queues, EH SNGs and other hardship grants could be granted by a case manager working anywhere in New Zealand. Therefore, in such cases, the TLA may not reflect the actual client address or location. Due to the transient nature of people receiving EH SNGs, the recorded address for a client may also be that of a trusted family member or friend who receives mail on their behalf.

From December 2021, we have changed our ethnicity reporting to an approach called 'total response'. Making this change means we recognise all aspects of someone's ethnicity. This change reflects our clients more accurately, aligns our approach with Statistics NZ's reporting and reflects best practice. Ethnicity is about people's identity and sense of belonging. Ethnicity measures cultural affiliation, rather than race, ancestry, nationality, or citizenship. Ethnicity is self-perceived, and people can identify with more than one ethnic group. Previously, we reported ethnicity using an approach

called 'prioritised ethnicity'. 'Prioritised ethnicity' means that we allocate people to a single ethnic group in an order of priority. The priority used by MSD previously was Māori, Pacific Peoples, Other and NZ European. For more information about 'total response' for ethnicity reporting, please see: [www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/tools/how-we-report-ethnicity](http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/tools/how-we-report-ethnicity).

- *Of the \$97.3 million granted for EHSNG in the June 2022 quarter, how much was spent;*

In order to provide you with this information, the Ministry would need to divert personnel from their core duties and allocate extra time to complete this task. The diversion of these resources would impair the Ministry's ability to continue standard operations and would be an inefficient use of the Ministry's resources. As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act, requires substantial collation. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your requests 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.

- *The amount of EHSNG granted, by type of accommodation funded (campsite/holiday parks, motel/hotel, hostel, shelter, ect), total and by ethnicity and/or region, for each of the June 2022, March 2022 and December 2021 quarters;*

Please find attached **Appendix One** containing the following tables:

- **Table Two:** The amount granted for EH SNGs granted nationally from 1 October 2021 to 30 June 2022 broken down by ethnicity and accommodation type.
- **Table Three:** The number of EH SNGs from 1 October 2021 to 30 June 2022 broken down by the TLA of a client's registered address and accommodation type.
- **Table Four:** The amount granted for EH SNGs from 1 October 2021 to 30 June 2022 broken down by the TLA of a client's registered address and ethnicity.
- *The amount of EHSNG granted that is recoverable or non-recoverable, total, and by ethnicity and/or region for each of the June 2022, March 2022 and December 2021 quarters;*

Please find attached **Appendix One** containing **Table Five** showing the amount granted for EH SNGs that are recoverable or non-recoverable from 1

October 2021 to 30 June 2022 broken down by ethnicity and the TLA of a client's registered address.

- *The average EHSNG granted per distinct client, by ethnicity and/or region for each of the June 2022, March 2022 and December 2021 quarters;*

Please find attached **Appendix One** containing **Table Six** showing the average amount granted for EH SNGs per distinct client from 1 October 2021 to 30 June 2022 broken down by ethnicity and the TLA of a client's registered address.

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](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.

Ngā mihi nui



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Housing**