



8 November 2022

Tēnā koe

On 10 October 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *The total amount of people using the (outlined below under MSD), followed by the ethnicity, and how many children in that service broken down by ethnicity.*
- *So if possible;*
  - *A total number of individuals and households in that service*
  - *Ethnicity*
  - *Any available data on children and young people*
  - *If unavailable for children then households with children is also acceptable*
  - *Ideally any information on children and ethnicity*
- *Ministry of Social Development*
  - *Emergency Housing*
  - *Accommodation supplement*
  - *Temporary additional support*
  - *IRR*
  - *Community Housing providers*
  - *Social housing register*

The Ministry does not hold information on the ethnicity of children receiving assistance, therefore this information is refused under section 18(g) of the Act as the information you had requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is either held by or closely connected to the functions of another department, Minister of the Crown or organisation.

In the spirit of being helpful, the Ministry is providing you instead with the number of clients reported as having children as part of their application for assistance and the ethnicity of those clients.

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, the Ministry 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).

Please find attached **Appendix One** containing six data tables for each section of your request. For clarity, I will address each part of your request in turn by assistance type.

### **Emergency Housing**

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).

Please find in the attached appendix, the following table:

- **Table One:** The number of clients with children receiving an Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant as at 30 September 2022 broken down by ethnicity.

When a client applies for an EH SNG, the client will provide the appointed Case Manager the total number of adults and children who will likely be staying at the emergency accommodation with them. No other information that identifies the relationships of these adults and children to the applicant is recorded for an EH SNG application, nor is confirmation of whether the children and/or adults will be staying in emergency accommodation for the duration of the EH SNG.

Children may also be counted more than once as the Ministry is unable to verify if the child/children are included in more than one household's EH SNG application. EH SNG clients may have complex family or caregiver relationships and it is not uncommon for the children of one parent to stay with another family member or there could be scenarios where the same child is recorded in multiple EH SNG applications (that is, both parents are in separate emergency accommodation at the same time).

### **Accommodation Supplement**

Accommodation Supplement (AS) is a weekly payment to assist people who are not in public housing with their rent, board or the cost of owning a home. A person does not have to be receiving a benefit to qualify for AS.

Please find in the attached appendix, the following table:

- **Table Two:** The number of clients with children receiving Accommodation Supplement as at 30 September 2022 broken down by ethnicity.

### **Temporary Additional Support**

Temporary Additional Support (TAS) is a weekly payment that helps to cover essential living costs that cannot be met from their income and through other resources. It is paid for a maximum of 13 weeks, and the recipient does not have to be receiving a benefit to qualify for TAS.

Please find in the attached appendix, the following table:

- **Table Three:** The number of clients with children receiving Temporary Additional Support as at 30 September 2022 broken down by ethnicity.

### **Income Related Rent Subsidy**

Income Related Rent Subsidy is part of the Government's financial support for public housing.

Public housing providers are paid the difference between the value of the Income Related Rent and the market rent rate or agreed rent rate for their public housing properties. This payment is called the Income Related Rent Subsidy.

Public housing providers are responsible for calculating the amount of Income Related Rent Subsidy and claiming the amount from the Ministry. The Ministry is responsible for processing the Income Related Rent Subsidy claims and paying the housing provider.

Please find in the attached appendix, the following tables:

- **Table Four:** The number of tenancies with children receiving Income Related Rent Subsidy as at 30 September 2022 broken down by ethnicity.
- **Table Five:** The number of tenancies with children as at 30 September 2022 broken down by ethnicity and Tenancy Provider.

### **Housing Register**

When New Zealanders are in need of public housing, their needs are recorded on the Public Housing Register which is comprised of a Housing Register and a Transfer Register. The Housing Register is prioritised by need and consists of applicants who have been assessed as being eligible for public housing. The Transfer Register is made up of people already in public housing, but who have requested and are eligible for a transfer to another property.

Please find in the attached appendix, the following table:

- **Table Six:** The number of primary applicants with children on the Public Housing Register as at 30 September 2022 broken down by ethnicity.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'PP. KM', is positioned above the typed name of the signatory.

Karen Hocking  
**Group General Manager**  
**Housing**