



7 September 2022

Tēnā koe

On 11 August 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *Can you please provide data on the recipients, number and value of Accommodation supplements and EHSNGs provided by MSD on a monthly (or quarterly) basis over 2017-2022, at a regional level? Can you also provide data on the number and value of the following housing support products, with a regional breakdown and quarterly over 2017-2022? Tenancy cost cover, bond grant, moving assistance, rent arrears assistance, rent in advance, tenancy cost cover, transition to alternative housing grant and other accommodation hardship grant.*

On 16 August 2022, the Ministry asked you to refine your request and confirm your preference for region type. The Ministry advised it can provide your data by Territorial Local Authority (TLA) or by the Ministry's regions. You confirmed on the same day you want the data broken down by TLA.

Housing Support Products (HSP) is a set of individual products that aim to address barriers to accessing, or retaining housing, by meeting needs not covered by other forms of assistance. HSPs are usually an option after all other housing support options have been exhausted.

This assistance is available to people who could sustain accommodation in the private housing (rentals) sector but require assistance to access it. This includes people who are existing public housing tenants, on the Social Housing Register, or people who have contacted the Ministry about housing support, but who could retain their current accommodation with some financial assistance.

Please see enclosed the following tables in the attached Excel Spreadsheet titled *Appendix: Housing Support Products Data, by TLA, quarterly*:

- **Table One:** The number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants, the number of distinct clients granted, and the amount granted from 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2022
- **Table Two:** The number of Housing Support Product Rent in Advance granted, and the amount granted from 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2022.
- **Table Three:** The number of Housing Support Product Transition to Alternative Housing Grant granted and the amount granted 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2022.
- **Table Four:** The number of Housing Support Product Bond Grant granted, and the amount granted 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2022.
- **Table Five:** The number of Housing Support Letting Fees granted, and the amount granted from 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2022.
- **Table Six:** The number of Housing Support product Moving Assistance granted, and the amount granted from 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2022
- working age Jobseeker Support Work Ready, as at end of June 2014 to end of June 2022, by Age group, Continuous Duration.
- **Table Seven:** The number of Housing Support Product Tenancy Costs Cover granted, and the amount granted 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2022.
- **Table Eight:** The number of Housing Support Product Rent Arrears granted, and the amount granted 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2022.
- **Table Nine:** The number of Accommodation Supplements and the amount paid as at the end of each quarter 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2022.

You will note that there is a notable increase in the number of grants and amount granted for some HSP categories for the period June 2020 to June 2021. This is a flow-on effect following the COVID-19 Alert Level Four Lockdown in March and April 2020, where moving properties was restricted. The introduction of temporary policy settings to Rent Arrears Assistance HSP, as a response to COVID-19, also increased the number of grants and amount granted for Rent Arrears Assistance HSP.

With regard to the increase in the amount paid for Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants over the years, the Ministry is able to meet 'the actual and reasonable costs' of emergency accommodation. The cost of the accommodation is set by the supplier based on market rates, and is influenced by a range of factors including demand, the size of the household requiring accommodation, and the region it is located in. The Ministry endeavours to meet the emergency housing needs of vulnerable people in the most cost-

effective manner possible. When faced with limited accommodation options, guidance to staff is that the priority is ensuring clients have somewhere to stay in the short term.

For more information regarding HSPs, please visit the Ministry's website at the following link: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/social-housing/supporting-people-to-independence.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 and Appendix 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 Housing Support Products, 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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Karen Hocking', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Karen Hocking
Group General Manager Housing