



15 August 2023

Tēnā koe

On 24 July 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- 1. latest available information about which hotels and motels in the Hamilton City TLA are used for emergency housing*
- 2. the number of stay units of each of the hotels and motels listed under 1 that are contracted by MSD for emergency housing*

On 31 July 2023 the Ministry contacted you to seek clarification on the second part of your request. As you did not respond, we have proceeded with our own interpretation of your request.

Demand for housing across New Zealand is growing and many 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 or private rental accommodation.

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

I will now respond to your questions in turn.

1. latest available information about which hotels and motels in the Hamilton City TLA are used for emergency housing

Please find attached **Appendix One**, which contains a list of emergency housing suppliers in the Motel/Hotel category in the Hamilton Territorial Local Authority (TLA) that received EH SNGs during the period 1 April 2023 and 30 June 2023.

2. the number of stay units of each of the hotels and motels listed under 1 that are contracted by MSD for emergency housing

It is important to note that the Ministry does not contract motels to provide emergency housing in New Zealand. Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants are intended as a one-off grant. They are not able to be paid in advance of the need, or beyond what an individual is entitled to at the time of application.

In order to receive an EH SNG payment, an accommodation supplier must register with the Ministry as a supplier. The Ministry can only pay into the bank accounts of businesses who are registered as suppliers. The registration does not create a contractual relationship between the Ministry and the accommodation supplier.

The Ministry has interpreted your request for 'stay units' as the number of rooms available in each motel/hotel for clients accessing emergency housing.

Your request for this information is refused under section 18(g) of the Act as this information 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.

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.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding Emergency Housing in the Hamilton TLA, 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 'K. Hocking', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Karen Hocking
**Group General Manager
Housing**