



31 January 2023

Tēnā koe

On 13 and 14 December 2022, you emailed the Honourable Carmel Sepuloni, Minister for Social Development and Employment requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *Demanding motels provide normal services to emergency housing tenants such as daily cleaning, linen, servicing will accelerate the move away from contracting to social housing. What is the budgeted cost of returning these motels to agreed condition, and is this funded by money printing or taxes.*
- *Once the parties agree to return motels to owners for tourist accommodation, does the state continue to pay full rental until remediation is completed to the owners satisfaction. What is the budgeted time-frame and cost of the expected turnover. How will this expense be funded? money printing, increased tax, or cost cutting in the PM,s department due to inefficiency.*

On 15 December 2022, your request was transferred to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) for consideration and response. The Ministry will now respond to your request.

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 Ministry pays an Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (EH SNG) 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 depending on individual circumstances. You can find more information regarding EH SNGs, at the following link: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/emergency-housing.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/emergency-housing.html).

Regarding your question on the "*...budgeted cost of returning motels to agreed condition, and is this funded by money printing or taxes*", the Ministry does not have a budgeted cost, or an agreed condition, therefore this part of your request is refused under section 18(g) of the Act as the information requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no reason to believe it is held by another department or more closely connected with the functions of another department.

However, where the Ministry is paying EH SNGs for accommodation, they can also facilitate the cost of a security deposit.

The Ministry provides a security deposit to housing providers that is designed to protect them when there are losses or damages caused by the Ministry's clients (or anyone else staying with them). The Ministry is aware that damage is sometimes caused in Emergency Housing, with the vast majority from normal things such as accidental breakages. Security deposits need to be agreed to by the clients and the supplier/provider of the accommodation, and approved by the Ministry, before a client can stay with a provider. More information on how security deposits work is available here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/providers/housing-providers/security-deposit.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/providers/housing-providers/security-deposit.html).

The Ministry provides information on its website to property owners, landlords and providers of emergency and public housing, here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/providers/housing-providers/index.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/providers/housing-providers/index.html).

In regard to your question asking "*...does the state continue to pay full rental until remediation is completed to the owner's satisfaction. What is the budgeted time-frame and cost of the expected turnover. How will this expense be funded?*", the Ministry does not pay full rental while a motel completes any repairs. There is no budgeted timeframe and cost, and therefore this part of your request is refused under section 18(g) of the Act as the information requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no reason to believe it is held by another department or more closely connected with the functions of another department.

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 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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