



3 February 2023

Tēnā koe

On 23 November 2022, you emailed Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand requesting information under the Official Information Act 1982. On 5 December 2022 Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand advised you that they had transferred part of your request to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) as follows:

1. *How much of the Mental Health Funding provided through Budget 2019 of \$1.8 billion has yet to be spent or allocated nationally?*
2. *How much of this funding has been appropriated and in what fiscal year/s?*
3. *How much of this funding by year has been committed?*
4. *Please provide information on any carry forwards and in what fiscal year/s?*
5. *Please could you provide a definition for each of the following terms 'allocated', 'committed', 'spent', 'underspend'.*

On 17 January 2023, the Ministry emailed you to advise that more time was required to respond to your request. The reason for the extension was that consultations necessary to make a decision on the request were such that a proper response to the request could not reasonably be made within the original time limit.

From Budget 2019, the sum of \$1.9 billion was provided across agencies to implement initiatives to assist with the Wellbeing of New Zealanders. Of this sum, \$141.917 million was provided to Vote Social Development, and administered by the Ministry to implement its initiatives.

With regard to your questions 1 to 4, please find an **APPENDIX** attached with two tables that provide an overview of the funding and expenditure for the mental wellbeing initiatives being led by the Ministry.

In the tables, each initiative is named in bold print, followed by the specific Ministry areas of appropriation for each initiative.

**TABLE One** shows the funding provided to the Ministry for the financial years 2019/2020, 2020/2021, 2021/2022 and 2022/2023. For your information, the Ministry's financial years run from 1 July to 30 June.

**TABLE Two** shows the updated appropriation amounts spent for each financial year up to the calendar month of November 2022.

For your reference, I have provided broad information about the different initiatives.

### **Disabled People and People with Health Conditions - Improving Employment and Wider Wellbeing Outcomes**

This initiative aims to support disabled people and people with health conditions, including those with mental health needs, to find and stay in meaningful employment, increase their knowledge and skills, and improve their health and wider wellbeing.

The funding for this initiative has provided additional capacity for the Ministry's contracted employment service, particularly for mental health support.

The funding received by the Ministry has either been spent or been forecast to be spent.

### **Historic Claims (Historical Abuse While in State Care)**

As part of Budget 2019, the Government invested \$93.8 million over three years under a multi-year appropriation, which allows for the carry forward of unspent funds for up to a further two years (30 June 2024). Table one shows the initial three-year appropriation. Table two is showing our life to date spend through to November 2022. The underspend to date is fully committed and will be spent prior to 30 June 2024.

This funding provides claimants of abuse in state care with a sense of justice, validation, and empowerment, with increased staffing and support changes to the Historic Claims process that enables the Ministry to respond to, and settle, more claims and provide appropriate support to claimants.

The allocation of \$93.8 million does not specifically relate to funding for mental health or addiction support. However, the Historic Claims initiative supports the priority of Supporting Mental Wellbeing.

As part of responding to Historic Claims, this initiative also assists claimants to access counselling and link them with other services. Where ACC or community support options are not appropriate for the claimant to access, Historic Claims will consider funding counselling for claimants. A pilot has also been funded for a wraparound navigation service that links claimants to existing services.

You will note that there has been no specific amount appropriated for the 2022/23 year. Historic Claims is a multi-year appropriation and unspent funds in the previous years have been rolled forward to 2022/23.

### **Housing Support Products: Expansion to Help More People Access and Maintain Tenancies**

The funding for this initiative has been spent on assessing and reviewing eligibility for Public, Transitional and Emergency Housing and Income Related Rent. The funding has also been put towards managing the Public Housing Register and the provision of products and services to help families with children who are living in Emergency Housing accommodation and who have received, and remain eligible to receive, Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants.

You will note in **TABLE Two**, some columns denoted by the entry "s18(f)". The funding for this initiative has been further broken up and spread throughout many different parts of the Ministry. To identify which portions of funding have been allocated to which areas of the Ministry, and which of those amounts have either been spent or have been allocated to be spent, would require substantial manual collation and research. As such, this part of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

The Ministry has considered whether it would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. The Ministry has concluded that, in either case, its ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

### **Maintaining and Expanding the Housing First Programme as a Response to Ending Homelessness**

The funding received by the Ministry has either been spent or been forecast to be spent. This was an increase in funding toward Accommodation Assistance being benefit expenditure in relation to social housing.

With regard to question 5 of your request regarding definitions, these are as follows:

<i>Allocated</i>	Assigned to a specific purpose.
<i>Committed</i>	Future expenditure to be incurred on obligations entered into.
<i>Spent</i>	Paid out.
<i>Underspend</i>	Spent less than what was allocated for the period.

The principles and purposes of the Act 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
- 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 of Social Development'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 regarding the Ministry's mental wellbeing initiatives, 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.

Nga mihi

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Brad Young', is positioned above the printed name.

Brad Young  
**Group General Manager**  
**Finance**