



10 February 2023

Tēnā koe

On 4 January 2023, you emailed the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), requesting information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). On 17 January 2023, DPMC transferred part of your request to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) as follows:

- *I'm also looking for some more information on the number of people in Emergency Housing in the Far North (Kawakawa north).*

Demand for housing across New Zealand continues to grow 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 depending on individual circumstances.

After seven nights, Work and Income arranges 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. 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 what 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 here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/emergency-housing.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/emergency-housing.html).

Some people may struggle to access suitable housing due to a lack of available supply or they simply may not be able to meet the high cost of housing which may result in them receiving EH SNG support for an extended period of time.

There is also a distinct group of people that faces a range of complex issues that are a barrier, such as mental health and addictions, criminal history, or family violence. There are still others that need to live in a specific area, due to the need to access specialist care or educational needs for them or their family.

For people with high and complex needs, it can sometimes be challenging to identify suitable long-term housing, which can lead to longer stays in emergency housing. Work and Income works closely with these people to see what can be done to ensure that once they have a home of their own, they have the skills to sustain it, and the support they need to keep it.

As you will appreciate, New Zealand's housing shortage is extremely challenging. For some time now, the Ministry's housing priorities have been to find housing for the homeless, longer-term housing for those in emergency accommodation and more suitable housing for the elderly, the very young, the disabled and people with other health conditions and issues.

You may be interested to know that work is underway across the Ministry, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities, to ensure a cohesive Government approach to accessible housing. To help increase the supply of public housing, including accessible public housing, HUD has published a Public Housing Plan. You can read more about this in the following link: [www.hud.govt.nz/community-and-public-housing/increasing-public-housing/public-housing-plan/](http://www.hud.govt.nz/community-and-public-housing/increasing-public-housing/public-housing-plan/).

Please see **Table One**, following this letter, that illustrates Emergency Housing data for the Far North District Territorial Local Authority (TLA) for the period 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2022.

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 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 in relation to Emergency Housing data in the Far North District Territorial Local Authority, 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 'K. Hocking', written in a cursive style.

Karen Hocking  
**Group General Manager  
Housing**

**Table One: Emergency Housing data for the Far North District TLA for the period 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2022**

Month	Grants	Households	Adults	Children	Amount Granted
July 2022	27	12	36	36	\$27,409
August 2022	33	15	42	60	\$43,569
September 2022	21	9	24	27	\$25,810
October 2022	15	9	18	18	\$14,903
November 2022	S	S	S	S	\$5,770
December 2022	S	S	S	S	\$1,915

**Notes:**

- Emergency Housing assistance is paid to the primary applicant as a Special Needs Grant.
- A client may receive more than one grant within a period.
- The Ministry began capturing household compositions of EH SNG applicants from 1 April 2020.
- The number of households is determined by the number of distinct clients granted Emergency Housing.
- The number of adults and children is declared by the client at the time of each individual grant.
- Children may be counted more than once as the Ministry is unable to verify if the child/children are included in more than one household living in emergency housing.
- Territorial Local Authority (TLA) is estimated based on the client's address at the time of the grant. This may not be the same as the address of the emergency housing provider.
- To protect confidentiality, the Ministry uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data.
- These data tables have had random rounding to base three applied to all cell counts in the table. The impact of applying random rounding is that columns and rows may not add exactly to the given column or row totals.
- The published counts will never differ by more than two counts.
- In certain circumstances, low numbers may potentially lead to individuals being identified.
- Due to these privacy concerns, numbers for some categories of clients have been suppressed, noted by 'S'.