



22 June 2023

Tēnā koe

On 25 May 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

*We would appreciate if you could please email us the following latest information you have on:*

- 1. The total number of people living in emergency housing in Taupo*
- 2. The number of Taupo locals living in emergency housing in Taupo*
- 3. The number of people who have links to Tuwharetoa living in emergency housing in Taupo*
- 4. The number of children under 5 y.o. living in emergency housing in Taupo*
- 5. The total number of motels being used for emergency housing in Taupo*
- 6. The number of new transitional houses in Taupo*
- 7. Duration of the contract with Vision of Helping Hands (Chelmswood motel)*

On 9 June 2023, your request was transferred in part to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for response, namely questions 6 and 7, as this information is believed to be more closely connected to the functions of their agency. You can expect a response from HUD regarding these questions in due course.

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. 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 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](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/emergency-housing.html).

I will now respond to your remaining questions in turn.

*1. The total number of people living in emergency housing in Taupo*

In the attached **Appendix** you will find **Table One**, which outlines the number of clients in emergency housing in Taupō Territorial Local Authority (TLA) as at 31 May 2023.

Please note, that in the tables provided, the TLA is estimated based on the clients' address at the time of the grant. This TLA may not be the same as the address of the emergency housing supplier.

*2. The number of Taupo locals living in emergency housing in Taupo*

I am unable to provide you with this information as it is held in notes on individual client files. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review a substantial number of files to determine the length of time clients receiving an EH SNG have resided in Taupō. As such, I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to these questions given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

*3. The number of people who have links to Tuwharetoa living in emergency housing in Taupo*

Your request for information about clients receiving an EH SNG in Taupō with affiliations to Tuwharetoa is refused in full under sections 9(2)(a) and 9(2)(ba)(i) of the Act.

This information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act in order to protect the privacy of natural persons. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information.

This information is withheld under section 9(2)(ba)(i) of the Act as it is subject to an obligation of confidence, and if released, could prejudice the supply of similar information in the future. The greater public interest is in ensuring that such information can continue to be supplied.

*4. The number of children under 5 y.o. living in emergency housing in Taupo*

I am unable to provide you with this information as it is held in notes on individual client files. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review a substantial number of files to review the birthdays of children attached to EH SNG applications. As such, I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to these questions given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

In the attached **Appendix** you will find **Table One**, which outlines the number of households in receipt of an Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant in Taupō TLA as at 31 May 2023, the number of households with children and the total number of children.

*5. The total number of motels being used for emergency housing in Taupo*

During the period 1 January 2023 to 31 May 2023, 15 suppliers were used by clients for emergency housing in Taupō TLA.

Please note, the types of accommodation included in this figure are Motel/Hotel, Hostel, Holiday Park/Campground, Marae and Shelter.

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 regarding emergency housing in Taupō, 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



Karen Hocking  
**Group General Manager  
Housing**

## Appendix

**Table One:** The number of households in receipt of an Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant in Taupō TLA as at 31 May 2023.

As at	Households	Households with children	Children
31 May 2023	63	27	45

### Table Notes:

- TLA is based on the clients address at the time of the grant. It may not be the same as the emergency housing provider.
- The types of accommodation included in this report are Motel/Hotel, Hostel, Holiday Park/Campground, Marae and Shelter.
- The number of children is declared at the time of each individual EH SNG.
- In some cases, children may have alternative or alternating living arrangements and may not necessarily be living in emergency housing for the entire duration in emergency housing.
- Children may also 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.

### Confidentiality:

- 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 published counts will never differ by more than two counts.