



30 May 2023

Tēnā koe

On 4 May 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

I request, under the Official Information Act, the following information on emergency housing SNGs and amount spent on emergency housing in Buller over the last two quarters (Oct-Dec 22) (Jan-Mar 23):

- 1. Which motels or other accommodation have been used as emergency housing in the last two quarters?*
- 2. For each quarter, how much was spent on each emergency housing provider, across how many clients, and how many grants?*
- 3. On average, how long are Buller clients staying in emergency housing?*
- 4. Of current clients in emergency housing, what's the longest stay?*
- 5. How many clients in each quarter were:*
 - Single people*
 - Couples with no dependents*
 - Couples with dependents*
 - and single people with dependents*

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

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.

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 work 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.

Please refer to the attached **Appendix**, containing:

- **Table One:** List of suppliers for clients granted Emergency Housing in the period 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023 in the Buller District Territorial Local Authority.
- **Table Two:** The number of grants, clients and amount granted for Emergency Housing in the Buller District Territorial Local Authority for the period 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2022, broken down by supplier and quarter.
- **Table Three:** The average and maximum consecutive weeks stay in Emergency Housing in the Buller District Territorial Local Authority for the period 1 October 2022 and 31 March 2023, broken down by quarter.
- **Table Four:** The number of Emergency Housing clients in the Buller District Territorial Local Authority for the period 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023, broken down by household composition and quarter.

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 Buller, 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



Karen Hocking
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Housing**