



21 February 2024

Tēnā koe

### **Official Information Act request**

Thank you for your email of 23 January 2024, requesting information about hardship assistance provided to people in the West Coast territorial authorities over the period 2020 – 2023.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) and have decided to grant your request.

Please refer to the attached **Appendix** which shows the number of hardship assistance payments in the West Coast Territorial Local Authority each calendar year from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2023, broken down by hardship assistance type, number of grants and distinct clients.

The Ministry through Work and Income provides recoverable and non-recoverable financial assistance to help people meet an immediate need for essential items such as food, health costs, power and other costs.

These payments are available to any person as long as they meet the income and asset test, and they are unable to meet the for an essential need from any other source.

Work and Income assists people to manage their costs in the longer term, not just with immediate and urgent assistance. It is important to understand why the client cannot meet these costs, to provide the most appropriate form of assistance. The applicant also has an obligation to manage their own finances with the help of Work and Income. This may include seeking financial advice from budgeting services.

You can find more information on hardship assistance at the following links:

#### Special Needs Grant

- [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/index.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/index.html)

#### Advance Payment of Benefit

- [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/advance-payment-of-benefit/index.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/advance-payment-of-benefit/index.html)

Recoverable Assistance Payment

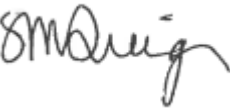
- [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/recoverable-assistance-payment/index.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/recoverable-assistance-payment/index.html).

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

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 my decision on your request, 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.

Yours sincerely

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Magnus O'Neill  
**General Manager**  
**Ministerial and Executive Services**



## Appendix

### Hardship Assistance Payment for clients in West Coast Territorial Local Authority from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2023, broken down by year and hardship assistance type.

| Calendar year | Type of Hardship Assistance |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  | Total Distinct Clients | Total Grants |
|---------------|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------|
|               | SNG                         |                  | ADV              |                  | RAP              |                  |                        |              |
|               | Distinct Clients            | Number of Grants | Distinct Clients | Number of Grants | Distinct Clients | Number of Grants |                        |              |
| 2020          | 2,562                       | 11,484           | 1,842            | 4,734            | 195              | 330              | 2,934                  | 16,551       |
| 2021          | 2,529                       | 9,462            | 1,905            | 4,746            | 159              | 249              | 2,961                  | 14,457       |
| 2022          | 2,439                       | 9,672            | 1,773            | 4,707            | 219              | 369              | 2,829                  | 14,748       |
| 2023          | 2,622                       | 10,020           | 1,755            | 4,344            | 177              | 315              | 3,000                  | 14,676       |

#### Notes:

- Territorial Local Authority is estimated based on the client's address recorded by the Ministry of Social Development at the time period, the client may not necessarily reside in the same address at that time.
- Ungeocoded address records that are unable to be matched to a Territorial Local Authority through suburb and city details have an unknown Territorial Local Authority.
- West Coast Territorial Local Authority includes Buller District, Grey District, and Westland District.
- SNG is Special Needs Grant.

- ADV is Advance Payment of Benefit.
- RAP is Recoverable Assistance Payment.
- Total distinct client is a count of distinct clients who received any hardship (ADV, RAP or SNG) in the given calendar year. Clients may receive more than one hardship payment in any given period.
- To protect confidentiality the Ministry of Social Development 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.