



4 September 2024

Tēnā koe

### **Official Information Act request**

Thank you for your email of 29 July 2024, requesting information about New Zealand Superannuation (NZS) entitlement while in Australia, including Age Pension data sharing, and the cost of payment. I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision set out below.

For the sake of clarity, I will respond to your questions in turn.

- 1. Who is the responsible agency/ department to ensure that any Kiwis residing in Australia and having been granted Australian citizenship are not being paid their equivalent superannuation from the New Zealand government?*

People who used to reside in New Zealand who have been granted Australian Citizenship may still be paid NZS from the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) while living in Australia under the Social Welfare (Reciprocity with Australia) Order 2017 (ASSA). Gaining Australian citizenship does not negate entitlement to NZS however, they would still need to be entitled under the ASSA.

- 2. How often does this responsible department exchange the data with their counterpart and update the information/benefit rate once the person becomes an Australian citizen?*

Changes to a client's Australian Residence Status will be provided to the Ministry by Centrelink through a change in circumstances report. This may or may not impact the rate of payment.

- 3. If the person has spent eligible years (residing in) in both countries and currently present in Australia then why should New Zealand taxpayers pay for their Age Pension?*
- 4. What will the New Zealand government be doing to prevent this in future if this is the case?*

New Zealand has reciprocal social security agreements with a number of countries. Each agreement enables New Zealanders access to certain benefits or pensions when moving to these countries and allows for similar entitlements to people who move to New Zealand from these countries. The ASSA is one such agreement, and allows former residents of one country access to certain benefits and pensions under the other country's social security system.

The ASSA ensures that there is a shared interest and responsibility for mutual clients. The cost is shared on both sides, for clients living in Australia and clients living in New Zealand. This agreement has been in place in its current form since 2017.

*5. Any health or benefit cost for Kiwis received in Australia be passed on to New Zealand government to pay as debt recovery? does same applies to Australian receiving treatment/benefit in NZ?*

We have interpreted this section of your request to cover the Age Pension/NZS. Under the Agreement referenced above, clients who live in Australia cannot be paid more than the Australian calculated rate (notional) which is based on the Australia income/asset test. The Ministry calculates a client's (proportional) rate based on their time spent living in New Zealand between the ages of 20 and 65 and pays the lesser of the two. Additionally, clients paid NZS in New Zealand who used to reside in Australia are asked to apply for an Australian pension which is then deducted from their NZS entitlement.

However, more broadly, Australian citizens and permanent residents have the right to live, work and reside indefinitely in New Zealand and meet residency requirements for a benefit automatically. These costs are not passed to the Australian government. More information can be found here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/our-services/about-international-services.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/our-services/about-international-services.html)

Regarding your query about New Zealand citizens residing in Australia and their benefit costs, this would need to be directed to Centrelink, as they are the responsible agency. More information can be found here: [www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/new-zealand-citizens-claiming-payments-australia](http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/new-zealand-citizens-claiming-payments-australia)

*6. How much NZ tax payer currently pays in Age pension for person not residing in Australia?*

\$20,342,448,526 is the amount paid to all countries excluding Australia for the financial year 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 for New Zealand Superannuation.

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 for information NZS entitlement in Australia, 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Magnus', is positioned above a horizontal line.

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