



20 September 2024

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 26 July 2024 to the Ministry of Social Development's (the Ministry) Whakatāne office, requesting information on referrals for emergency food parcels within Whakatāne, and about contracts with service providers in the district.

Firstly, I would like to apologise for the delay in responding to your request for official information.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on your request set out below. For the sake of clarity, I will respond to your request in parts.

- 1. Which providers are WINZ referring people to for emergency food parcels in the Whakatāne District?*

The list of food parcel providers is as follows.

- Whakatāne:
 - Have a Heart
 - Te Puna Ora O Mataatua
 - Salvation Army
- Murupara: Ngati Whare
- Kawerau: Tūwharetoa Ki Kawerau
- Opotiki/East Cape: Te Whanau a Apanui.

- 2. Approximately how many emergency parcels a week are approved in the district?*

The Ministry does not approve food parcels, but if a client does not qualify for a Special Needs Grant (food) they are provided with a letter of decline. This letter can then be taken to a food bank if the clients wish to pursue this option. The Ministry is unable to report on the number of decline letters issued as this information is held on client files. To collate this information staff would have to manually review a substantial number of files. 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 your request 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. What EBOP (Eastern Bay of Plenty) organisations have received Food Secure Communities Funding since it was introduced?

The community food sector plays an important role supporting people experiencing food insecurity. The Ministry's primary way of supporting food security is through income support including the Special Needs Grant for Food.

The Ministry did not directly fund the community food sector before the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ministry's Food Secure Communities programme was established in 2020 to provide support due to the increased demand created by the impacts of COVID-19.

The Ministry has published the successful funding recipients on our website here: [Food Secure Communities funding rounds - Ministry of Social Development \(msd.govt.nz\)](https://www.msd.govt.nz/food-secure-communities-funding-rounds)

4. Are there any current contracts with service providers in the district that have an element of food provision to address food insecurity? if so, which organisations and who do they serve?

The Ministry's Community Food Provider Fund 2024-2025 provides contributory grants to support the purchasing of community food supplies and other associated overheads of community food providers with high demand. Grants are for the period 1 August 2024 to 30 June 2025.

There may be further grants in place as the Ministry is working through the process to finalise this fund. The full list of successful providers will be published here: [Food Secure Communities funding rounds - Ministry of Social Development \(msd.govt.nz\)](https://www.msd.govt.nz/food-secure-communities-funding-rounds).

5. Are any EBOP organisations being considered/invited to apply for the limited funding available this year?

In addition to the Community Food Provider Fund 2024-2025, the Government has agreed to invest in food security initiatives which aim to increase the amount of healthy and affordable food in communities. The Ministry is still working through finalising the process for this funding and therefore is unable to advise which organisations will be considered or invited to apply.¹ The full list of successful providers will be published here: [Food Secure Communities funding rounds - Ministry of Social Development \(msd.govt.nz\)](https://www.msd.govt.nz/food-secure-communities-funding-rounds).

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.

¹ For this reason, the information does not exist, and this part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act.

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 or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Magnus', written over a light grey grid background.

Magnus O'Neill
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services