



8 April 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

On 31 March 2025, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development transferred your request for official information to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) to respond to. You requested the following information:

- *Any and all briefings provided to Ministers in the last 5 years on expanding the Winter Energy Payment*

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on your request set out below.

The rate of Winter Energy Payment (WEP) has remained the same since it was introduced in 2018, except between 1 May 2020 and 1 May 2021, where it was temporarily doubled as part of the COVID-19 response.

If you are interested in documents relating to the temporary changes made to WEP where the rate was doubled during COVID-19, you can find the relevant Cabinet Paper and Cabinet Minute at the following links:

- www.covid19.govt.nz/assets/Proactive-Releases/proactive-release/COVID-19-Overview-of-the-Governments-Response-Economic-Package-Minute.pdf
- www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/covid-19/unite-against-covid/covid-19-recovery-package-increases-to-main-benefits-and-the-winter-energy-payment-paper.pdf

Please note some information contained in the Cabinet Minute has been withheld. I have not assessed these because it does not relate to WEP.

As there have been no further changes to the rate of WEP, I am refusing your request for briefings on expanding the WEP under section 18(e) of the Act, on the basis that it does not exist.

Official reports relating to the introduction of WEP can be found at the following links:

- www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2018-04/fp-3803996.pdf
- www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2018-04/fp-3800246.pdf
- www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2018-04/fp-3903011.pdf
- www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2018-04/fp-3810514.pdf
- www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2018-04/fp-3810514.pdf

- www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2018-01/ria-tsy-fp-dec17.pdf

All historical rates of WEP are publicly available on the Ministry's Work and Income website at the following link:

- www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/deskfile/extra-help-information/winter-energy-payment-tables/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.

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

pp. 

Anna Graham
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services