



17 January 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your online request submitted on 30 October 2024, requesting a list of all COVID-19 Wage Subsidy recipients, including the amount received, number of employees, and repayment.

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

The Wage Subsidy Scheme enabled rapid support for thousands of New Zealand businesses during a time of uncertainty and ensured that employees were able to remain connected with their employers during the COVID-19 lockdowns. The scheme was set up as a high-trust model to quickly deliver funds to support workers, families, and businesses.

You may also be interested to know that the Ministry has a publicly available tool that enables you to search for individual employers who have received any Wage Subsidy and the amount and number of employees paid.

The online search tool can be found here: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2020/covid-19/covid-19-wage-subsidy-employer-search.html

Please note, sole traders and employers with fewer than three employees have been omitted from the search tool. Following the Ministry's discussion with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner during the development of the search tool, this was done to ensure the protection of the privacy of individuals associated with small businesses. The aim of the search tool is not to identify individual persons who received the wage subsidy, and the protection of privacy for natural persons outweighs the public interest for this information.

The attached **Appendix** provides a list of businesses (excluding sole traders) paid one or more of the COVID-19 Wage Subsidies, including the subsidy type, and shows which have made repayments to date and how much has been repaid.

The data is derived from the search tool, and so does not include information that relates to sole traders or businesses that have employed less than three employees. This information is refused under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of natural persons. However, if you are particularly interested in sole traders or businesses that have employed less than three employees, please let us know and we will action your new request as a priority. As part of this, we would look at any options to provide you with a helpful response while weighing the individual privacy interest. If you do make such a request, I would welcome your

comments on the public interest factors you consider are relevant to the release of this information, as this will assist the Ministry in its assessment under the Act.

Please note, in the data I am releasing, the amount repaid is as of 31 October 2024 and, for some businesses, there may still be repayments outstanding or yet to commence.

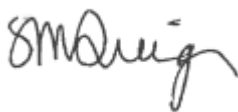
The Ministry does not hold the ANZSIC code for each COVID-19 Wage Subsidy recipient. I am therefore refusing this part of your request under section 18(g) of the Act as the information you had requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is either held by or closely connected to the functions of another department, Minister of the Crown or organisation.

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. 

Magnus O'Neill
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services