



5 September 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 15 June 2025, requesting information about the location of the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry)'s Thames Service Centre, including community engagement.

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

I am providing you with as much information as possible. Where I have decided to grant your request, I have done so as permitted under the following sections of the Act:

- section 16(1)(e), which allows the Ministry to give a summary of the contents of an issue, and
- section 16(2)(a), which requires an agency to provide the information available in the way preferred by the person requesting it, unless to do would impair efficient administration.

This ensures that the welfare and safety of our staff remains protected, whilst also ensuring sufficient information is provided to address any transparency and accountability reasons favouring release of the information.

I provide the following context before answering your questions.

The relocation and closures of the Thames Service Centre

The Ministry's relocation of the Thames site to temporary premises in Queen Street was the result of extraordinary circumstances resulting in the Pollen Street site being uninhabitable, and unable to be reoccupied.

Due to the temporary nature of the Queen Street site, it has been necessary to adjust how services are delivered to ensure the safety of our staff and clients, while also delivering a face-to-face service for our clients.

I will now respond to each of your questions in turn.

- 1. What action has MSD taken to identify and secure a permanent, fit for purpose location for the Thames MSD Service Centre?*
- 2. What sites have been assessed, if any, for relocating the Thames MSD Service Centre?*
- 3. What proven action has been taken by the Regional Commissioner to secure new fit for purpose premises for the Thames MSD Service Centre?*

A key factor when securing any new permanent site is ensuring that is safe and secure for both our clients and staff, as well as being fit for purpose to deliver the appropriate services in the longer term.

The Ministry issued a tender through the Government Electronic Tendering Service website on 29 November 2024. This provided the requirements that needed to be met for a replacement site (we have provided this for your information). The tender closed on 10 February 2025, but unfortunately, there was only one response received and when evaluated it was determined that it did not meet the requirements.

With the formal procurement process completed and no suitable replacement property found, the Ministry is continuing to seek other options for suitable permanent premises including making direct approaches to the market.

- 4. Is walk-in access for the temporary Thames MSD Service centre restricted, and if so, why?*

In line with the Ministry's standard security processes, a security assessment is carried out on all spaces where services are delivered to the public. Where the Ministry occupies a temporary location all reasonably practicable steps are taken to ensure the safety of staff, clients, and visitors. Due to the layout of the office in Thames and the reduction in interviewing desks due to space, restricting the number of people able to be accommodated at the site safely means clients can be seen by appointment only. Appointments are managed in person by appointment or phone wherever possible to ensure clients still receive the support they need.

Please note that the Ministry's health, safety, and security Site Risk Assessments for Thames from 2023 and 2025, are withheld under section 6(d) of the Act, as good reason for withholding official information exists, if the making available of that information would be likely to endanger the safety of any person.

- 5. What direct engagement has MSD had with the wider community (Community Board, Council, MP, Aged Concern, service groups etc) about disruption, service changes, service impediments and re-location progress?*

The Ministry has continued to have widespread engagement with the community, the council, and the local Member of Parliament's electorate office on this issue. We have responded to numerous requests for updates about this issue.

Our key messages are as follows.

Due to the temporary nature of the current site, it has been necessary to adjust how services are delivered to ensure the safety of our staff and clients, while also delivering a face-to-face service for our clients.

Staff continue to see people for booked face-to-face appointments, as well as meeting their needs over the phone where we can. In addition, people are still able to drop off documentation and verification to the site.

Clients can phone and make appointments at the region's closest sites in Paeroa or Waihi. They can also call and make an appointment to talk with someone local on the phone using the following contact details:

- Call 0800 559 009 for Work and Income
- Call 0800 552 002 for Senior Services
- Visit www.my.msd.govt.nz.

6. *Please provide a copy of any documentation from Jan 2024, including correspondence, regarding the Thames MSD service provision; and including any documentation and correspondence to and from the Regional Commissioner.*

As noted earlier, I have provided you with a summary of this information in the preceding responses to your questions.

Documents in scope from staff about issues with the service centre are refused in full under section 9(2)(a) of the Act to protect the privacy of natural persons. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information.

Documents about the ongoing procurement process the Ministry is conducting to find a fit for purpose site are withheld under section 9(2)(j) of the Act to enable the Ministry to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations). The greater public interest is in ensuring that government agencies can continue to negotiate without prejudice.

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



Anna Graham
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services



Ministry of Social Development

Request for Proposal

Long Term Office Lease Accommodation – Thames
RFP Reference: 24.284.01

RFP Released: 29 November 2024

Deadline for Questions: 5pm, 31 January 2025

Deadline for Proposals: 3pm, 10 February 2025

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

Acronyms and Glossary

The following acronyms and abbreviations are used in this document.

Acronym / Abbreviation	Definition
MSD	Ministry of Social Development
Respondent	A Supplier who submits a Proposal in accordance with the process set out in this RFP.
Proposal	The response a Respondent submits in reply to the RFP. It comprises the RFP Response Form, the Pricing Schedule and all other information submitted by the Respondent.
RFP	Request for Proposal
Point of Contact	The person names in Section 2.3 All communications regarding this RFP must be directed to this person.
Deadline for Proposals	The date listed in Section 2.2. Proposals must be submitted by this date and time.
Response Form	The template attached via GETS. Suppliers must use this as the template for their Proposal.

1. Overview

This Request for Proposal (RFP) is issued by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD).

1.1. About MSD

The Ministry has around 9,000 staff, and nearly 160 locations around New Zealand with our national office in Wellington.

MSD helps New Zealanders to be safe, strong, and independent through employment, income support, superannuation services, student allowances and loans, social housing assessments, funding of community service providers and social policy advice to government.

We work with some of New Zealand's most vulnerable people in large volumes daily. While we offer service and support through a range of channels, part of our uniqueness comes from being able to offer intense support to clients on a face-to-face basis. Our environments need to meet the needs of the community and ensure they provide functional and safe settings.

1.2. What We Need

MSD is looking for long term leased office accommodation in the Thames retail district that can service the needs of the community and meet the set up and design requirements of a client-facing MSD Service Centre.

We are seeking accommodation an existing site that:

- provides approximately 400-500m² of ground floor office space
- provides a good quality, modern, safe and secure physical workspace
- has an efficient floor plate and allows for open plan environments
- is close to public amenities (parking, proximity to bus routes etc.)
- has onsite parking.

We are looking for landlords with a proven track record of delivering office accommodation in a timely manner and Respondents will need to have a proven

track record of looking after building assets and tenants with an effective infrastructure that supports this.

1.3. What We Don't Want

We are not seeking sites that are outside of this RFP's scope, tenders for options that are not currently defined in the RFP will not be reviewed.

1.4. What's Important to Us?

MSD are looking for credible providers who have the capability, capacity and experience to deliver the requirements set out in this RFP. It is very important that throughout this procurement we align and support Government Broader Outcomes (refer 3.3).

2. Key Information

2.1. Context

- a) This RFP is an invitation to submit a Proposal for long term leased office accommodation in Thames.
- b) This RFP is an open market tender process.
- c) This is a single stage process.
- d) Words and phrases that have special meaning are shown by the use of capitals. Definitions can be found in Section 1 of this document.

2.2. Timeline

The proposed timeline for the procurement is as follows.

Activity	Date
Deadline for supplier questions	5pm, 31 January 2025
Deadline for MSD to answer questions	3 February 2025
Deadline for Proposals	3pm, 10 February 2025
Respondent presentations (if required)	Shortlisted Respondents will be notified in writing.
Notify Respondents of outcome (indicative)	28 March 2025

Due diligence & lease negotiations commence	31 March 2025
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2.3. How to Contact Us

- a) All enquiries must be directed via GETS: www.GETS.govt.nz
- b) Our Point of Contact:

Name: Pauline Yemm

Title: Senior Commercial Specialist

2.4. Documents

The following documents make up this RFP:

- this RFP document
- RFP Response Form
- Government Standard Building Performance Specifications
- MSD Public Sector Standard Lease.

2.5. Developing and Submitting Your Proposal

- a) This RFP sets out the step-by-step process and conditions that apply to this process.
- b) Take time to read and understand the RFP.
- c) Develop a strong understanding of our requirements.
- d) In structuring your Proposal consider how it will be evaluated. Section 4 describes our Evaluation Methodology.
- e) For helpful hints on tendering and access to a supplier resource centre go to: www.procurement.govt.nz/suppliers.
- f) If anything is unclear or you have a question, please email our Point of Contact (Section 2.3).
- g) In submitting your Proposal, you must use the Response Form attached.
- h) You must also complete and sign the declaration at the end of the Response Form.
- i) Check you have provided all information requested, and in the format and order asked for.

2.6. Address for Submitting Your Proposal

Proposals must be submitted via GETS.

We will not accept proposals via any other method unless previously agreed with the Point of Contact (Section 2.3).

2.7. Our RFP Process, Terms and Conditions

- a) Offer Validity Period: In submitting a Proposal the Respondent agrees that their offer will remain open for acceptance by MSD for 3 calendar months from the Deadline for Proposals.
- b) The RFP is subject to the RFP Process, Terms and Conditions (shortened to RFP-Terms) described in Section 6.

2.8. Later Changes to the RFP or RFP Process

- a) If, after publishing the RFP, we need to change anything about the RFP or RFP process or want to provide suppliers with additional information we will let all suppliers know via GETS.
- b) If you downloaded the RFP from GETS you will automatically receive notifications of any changes through GETS.

3. Requirements

3.1. Context

The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) is seeking to lease new premises for its Thames Services Centre. The new premises needs to be opened and operating prior to 30 November 2026.

This procurement primarily seeks existing properties; however, we are open to new developments that meet our timeframes.

We require approximately 400-500m² of ground floor office space, located in or near the Thames office/retail area.

We are looking for landlords or developers with a proven track record of delivering office accommodation in a timely manner.

The form of lease will be the MSD Gross Public Sector Standard Lease.

3.2. Requirements

The proposed office space will need to meet the following criteria:

- Be in the fringe retail/office zone, close to other retailers.
- Be ground floor premises with good profile and easy access from the street frontage – access to cater for people with disabilities.
- Close to public parking, bus routes and/or other public transport.
- Ground floor space shall have one egress point at the front of the premises plus a secondary egress at the rear.
- A regular-shaped, efficient, open plan space with a minimal number of columns and intrusions.
- Good natural light with windows on at least 2 sides of the tenancy.
- Demonstrate how compliance with the attached Government Property Group Building Performance Specifications will be achieved.
- For an existing building, provide evidence of seismic rating (note: GPG guidelines are set at a minimum NBS rating of 67%-79%), fire occupancy report, and asbestos survey (and Asbestos Management Plan if applicable). Confirm that the site has no water leaks or mould.

- Accessible main entrance with two sets of double entry automatic doors, to create a wind lobby, accessible client toilet facility, exclusive staff toilets, plus an accessible toilet/shower facility.
- Be able to have fibre access for telecommunications.
- Opportunity to incorporate accessible modifications.
- Other optional features that improve the working environment, such as decks, courtyards and landscaping, end-of-trip facilities, carbon neutral features (e.g., on-site power generation, water capture and conservation, sun shading).
- On-site carpark suitable for one fleet vehicle.
- Carpark to have capability to accommodate MSD CCTV camera coverage.

3.3. Broader Outcomes

Broader outcomes are the secondary benefits that are generated by the way a good, service, or works, is produced or delivered. These outcomes can be social, environmental, cultural or economic benefits, and will deliver long-term Public Value for New Zealand. We recognise that our procurement activities offer a unique opportunity to achieve broader outcomes for New Zealand, and are working on the identified four priority outcomes:

- Increasing access for New Zealand businesses.
- Construction skills and training.
- Improving conditions for New Zealand workers.
- Reducing emissions and waste.

We will evaluate Proposals which promote Broader Outcomes. These may be social, environmental, cultural, or economic. See more here - [Broader outcomes | New Zealand Government Procurement and Property](#)

4. Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation process will include but not be limited to the following:

- Registration of Proposals and undertaking an initial assessment for completeness.

- A PASS/FAIL assessment against the mandatory preconditions. Only those registrations that pass will progress to the next evaluation stage.
- Individual assessment by the Evaluation Panel Members of the responses in accordance with a provided template and instructions.
- Moderation meeting.
- Request for clarification and or additional information can be sought at any time if required.
- Registrations are ranked in descending moderated score order.
- Due diligence.

4.1. Evaluation Model

The Evaluation Model for this procurement utilises a combination of Weighted and Non-Weighted Criteria. Price is a Weighted Criterion. All Proposals that are capable of full delivery on time will be shortlisted. Proposals that score highly will likely be selected for further lease negotiation. MSD is under no obligation to select a Respondent.

4.2. Evaluation Process

In line with the Evaluation Model above, each Evaluator will be given a copy of the Proposals in order to carry out an independent evaluation of the non-price section of each Proposals against the approved Evaluation Criteria.

An initial moderation session will be led by the Panel Chair and Panel Facilitator. The purpose of this session will be to review the Proposals and discuss individual scores, including any outlying scores. As a result of the discussion individual scores may be adjusted as necessary, with a record kept of any updated scores along with the rationale.

Should there be two or more close scoring submissions, MSD may opt to enter a presentation, site visit or interview stage and any shortlisted Respondents will be notified in writing.

4.3. Evaluation Team

A cross-functional team will be involved in the evaluation of bids and recommended the Preferred Proposal.

4.4. Evaluation Criteria and Weightings

a) Pre-Conditions

Each Proposal must meet all the following pre-conditions. Proposals which fail to meet one or more will be eliminated from further considerations.

#	Pre-Condition
1	Proposal must supply the address of the proposed premises and the area available for lease.
2	Premises must have one egress point at the front plus an egress from the rear of the site.
3	Premises must have a floor area of between 400-500m ² and be on the ground floor with street frontage that meets accessibility requirements.

b) Evaluation Criteria

Having met all the Pre-Conditions, qualifying bids will be evaluated on their merits using the following Evaluation Criteria and Weightings.

Criterion	Weighting
Location	25%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ground floor premises with easy access from the street frontage.• Has a floor area of between 400-500m².• Location is fringe retail/office zone, close to the retail area.• Description of neighbouring retail services and other businesses.	

Criterion	Weighting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good accessibility for client parking, accessible carparks and close to bus routes or other public transport. 	
Property Availability	15%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be available early 2026 for MSD to complete its fit out ready for occupation by 30 November 2026. • Programme provided to demonstrate that the building will be available for occupation within the timeframe stipulated. • Any risks to the delivery of the building is identified and mitigations provided. 	
Building, Carparks & Security	40%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A regular-shaped, efficient, open plan space prior to fit out with minimal columns and intrusions. • A glazed double door entry lobby. • Have a minimum of one egress point at the front, with a secondary egress from the rear of the premises. • One onsite car park for MSD fleet vehicle. • Good accessibility and profile. • Good natural light with glazing on at least 2 sides. • Ceiling: acoustic suspended ceiling, minimum 2.8m height, fully seismically braced. • Building services: HVAC, LED lighting, automatic doors, fire systems, lifts (if applicable). • Compliance: seismic rating, fire occupancy, NABERs, asbestos, no mould present. • Accessible front-of-house client toilet facility and exclusive staff toilets/shower. • Fibre access for telecommunications. • Other optional features/benefits. 	
Ownership / Lease	10%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ownership structure of the property. 	

Criterion	Weighting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reputation/integrity. • Proven track record and experience with government tenants. • Proposed term of lease. • Acceptance of MSD's Public Sector Standard Lease. 	
Price	5%
Indicative market rental rates plus any assumptions supporting the proposed rent.	
Public Value and Broader Outcomes	5%
Ability to support MSD achieve broader social, economic, cultural, and environmental outcomes and wellbeing	
References	0
MSD will conduct reference checks on each Respondent as part of the evaluation process. Although they are not Weighted, they will be used to validate Proposals and will be considered in the overall decision-making process.	
TOTAL WEIGHTINGS	100%

Both Weighted and Non-Weighted sections may have an impact on the Evaluation Team's final recommendation regarding a Preferred Supplier. Consequently, the recommended Preferred Supplier may not necessarily have obtained the highest weighted score.

c) Pricing

The rent shall be the gross current rent for the Proposal that is in accordance with the MSD Public Sector Standard Lease and reflects the proposed premises and the Respondent's fit out.

In submitting the price, the Respondent must meet the following:

- Respondents must provide an indicative gross rental rate, exclusive of GST.

- b) The pricing schedule is to show a breakdown of all costs, fees, expenses and charges associated with the full delivery of the Requirements, exclusive of GST.
- c) Respondents are to document in their Proposal all assumptions and qualifications made about financial pricing information.
- d) Prices are to be tendered in NZ\$.

4.5. Rating Scale

The Evaluation Team will use the following rating scale to evaluate the Proposals against the Evaluation Criteria:

Rating	Definition	Score
Excellent	The Proposal exceeds the criteria and offers added value with supporting evidence. Respondent demonstrates excellent ability, understanding, experience and skills.	9-10
Good	The Proposal fully meets the criteria and offers minor additional benefits with supporting evidence. Respondent demonstrates good ability, understanding, experience and skills.	7-8
Acceptable	The Proposal substantially meets the criteria, with supporting evidence.	5-6
Reservations	The Proposal satisfies only a minimum of the criteria but not all. Reservations about the Respondent to adequately meet the criteria. Little supporting evidence.	3-4
Serious Reservations	Extremely limited or no supporting evidence to meet the criteria. Minimum effort made to meet the criteria.	1-2
Unacceptable	Does not comply or meet the criteria at all. Insufficient information to demonstrate the criteria.	0

4.6. Due Diligence

MSD will reserve the right to carry out the following Due Diligence on Respondents:

Note: any Due Diligence undertaken will not be part of the Weighted Evaluation but may be used in the overall selection process.

a) Analysis of Ownership

- Check legal status of entity.

- Check ownership (owners, directors, and relationships to holding or parent corporations).
- Length of time in operation.
- Confirmation there are no actual, potential, or perceived COI's.
- Certificate of Title search.
- District Plan search.
- Google / Location search.

b) Analysis of Finances

- Respondents current and future financial viability (for the expected contract duration).
- Review of Respondents annual reports for the last three years.
- Review of last independently audited accounts to check profitability and liquidity.
- Undertake credit check.
- Review insurance certificates.
- Confirm if any current or pending issues with Inland Revenue or any other relevant jurisdictions.

c) Security Checks

- Review of Respondents security management systems (e.g. ISO27000).
- Check of any convictions against the Respondent or the Respondents personnel that could compromise the contract.
- Check of any pending criminal cases that could compromise the contract.

d) Other

- Arrange site visits.
- Request Respondents make a presentation.

5. Contract

5.1. Contract Type

The Proposed Contract that we intend to use for this procurement is the MSD Public Sector Standard Lease as attached to this RFP (via GETS).

5.2. Lease Term

The lease term will be negotiated following short listing, but usual terms are six (6) to nine (9) years for an existing building, or nine (9) to twelve (12) years for a new building specifically constructed for MSD. The lease term is dependent upon the quantum of capital investment as well as ownership of the fixtures and fittings. In addition to the initial lease term, we would require a minimum of three (3) rights of renewal of three (3) years each.

6. RFP Terms and Conditions

This RFP is subject to the following Terms and Conditions:

[RFP Terms and Conditions \(procurement.govt.nz\)](https://procurement.govt.nz)