



21 JUN 2016



Dear

On 3 May 2016 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

1. *The number of beneficiaries who received advance payments of benefits in the following areas each calendar year for the past three calendar years.*
 - *Northland*
 - *Rotorua*
 - *Bay of Plenty*
 - *Hawke's Bay*
 - *Wairarapa*
 - *Whanganui*
 - *New Zealand-wide*
2. *The total value of those advance payments in each area each year.*
3. *The three most common reasons for receiving an advance payment in each separate area last calendar year.*
4. *The number of beneficiaries who requested advance payments of benefits in each of the same areas.*
5. *The most common reason requests were unsuccessful in each area last calendar year.*

The Ministry of Social Development through Work and Income may provide an Advance Payment of Benefit to people receiving a benefit who have an immediate need for essential items such as food, health costs (including medical and dental costs), power and other costs. To qualify for an Advance Payment of Benefit, applicants must meet qualifying criteria and applications may be granted or declined depending on whether they meet this criteria. For further information on the criteria for an Advance Payment of Benefit please see the link below:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/advance-payment-of-benefit/qualifications.html

Please find attached a series of tables in response to your request for information.

Tables one to three provide the number of grants, declines and applications processed for Advance Payments of Benefit for the three calendar years from 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2015, broken down by region. Please note that data can only be broken down to a regional level, and as such your request for data specifically relating to Rotorua, Hawke's Bay, Wairarapa and Whanganui is refused under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act as this information is held in notes on individual case files. In order to provide you with this information Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files. The greater public interest is in

the effective and efficient administration of the public service. However, data relating to those locations is included in the relevant regional data. Further, all regions nation-wide have been included, as well as total national figures, to provide you with context for this data.

Table four provides the number of Advance Payments of Benefit granted and declined, by top three Advance types, by region from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015.

Table five provides the number of Advance Payments of Benefit declined, by reason for decline, by region from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015. You will note that the reason for a decline will be different to the type of Advance applied for. For example, an application for an Advance for school education costs may be declined because the need can be met in another way. The Ministry works with clients to help them manage their finances, and this may include negotiating payment of accounts by instalments.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider public after ten working days. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

I hope you find this information helpful. You have the right to seek an investigation and review of my response by the Ombudsman, whose address for contact purposes is:

The Ombudsman
Office of the Ombudsman
PO Box 10-152
WELLINGTON 6143

Yours sincerely



Ruth Bound
Deputy Chief Executive Service Delivery

Table One: The number of grants, declines and applications processed for Advance Payments of Benefit from 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2013

| Region | Declined | Number of grants | Amount granted | Applications processed |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Auckland Metro | 7,733 | 97,546 | \$40,193,732.57 | 105,279 |
| Bay of Plenty | 4,657 | 22,704 | \$9,787,498.75 | 27,361 |
| Canterbury | 2,555 | 15,955 | \$6,610,588.31 | 18,510 |
| Central | 1,481 | 19,805 | \$7,971,537.89 | 21,286 |
| East Coast | 1,637 | 19,480 | \$7,996,928.42 | 21,117 |
| Nelson | 738 | 9,596 | \$3,843,107.95 | 10,334 |
| Northland | 1,018 | 21,167 | \$8,702,657.31 | 22,185 |
| Southern | 980 | 16,059 | \$5,795,704.14 | 17,039 |
| Taranaki | 1,629 | 14,554 | \$5,583,371.00 | 16,183 |
| Waikato | 2,561 | 23,980 | \$9,752,709.89 | 26,541 |
| Wellington | 1,742 | 22,997 | \$8,815,760.44 | 24,739 |
| Other | 1,751 | 22,775 | \$11,796,235.57 | 24,526 |
| Total (national) | 28,482 | 306,618 | \$126,849,832.24 | 335,100 |

Note:

"Other" refers to those service centres that do not represent a geographic location such as Contact Centres. This is a count of applications granted and declined, not clients. Clients may be counted twice in a period.

Table Two: The number of grants, declines and applications processed for Advance Payments of Benefit from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2014

| Region | Declined | Number of grants | Amount granted | Applications processed |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Auckland Metro | 5,984 | 94,134 | \$39,452,114.62 | 100,118 |
| Bay of Plenty | 3,640 | 23,914 | \$9,753,451.75 | 27,554 |
| Canterbury | 1,842 | 15,016 | \$6,259,106.08 | 16,858 |
| Central | 1,221 | 19,690 | \$7,864,202.04 | 20,911 |
| East Coast | 1,346 | 18,440 | \$7,461,160.04 | 19,786 |
| Nelson | 547 | 9,593 | \$3,768,960.07 | 10,140 |
| Northland | 777 | 21,216 | \$8,308,205.09 | 21,993 |
| Southern | 710 | 15,582 | \$5,388,477.75 | 16,292 |
| Taranaki | 931 | 16,039 | \$6,053,825.89 | 16,970 |
| Waikato | 1,985 | 24,949 | \$9,951,959.07 | 26,934 |
| Wellington | 1,450 | 22,218 | \$8,108,422.49 | 23,668 |
| Other | 1,899 | 34,053 | \$14,564,283.20 | 35,952 |
| Total (national) | 22,332 | 314,844 | \$126,934,168.09 | 337,176 |

Note:

"Other" refers to those service centres that do not represent a geographic location such as Contact Centres. This is a count of applications granted and declined, not clients. Clients may be counted twice in a period.

Table Three: The number of grants, declines and applications processed for Advance Payments of Benefit from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015

| Region | Declined | Number of grants | Amount granted | Applications processed |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Auckland Metro | 4,976 | 96,546 | \$42,928,421.99 | 101,522 |
| Bay of Plenty | 3,064 | 24,674 | \$9,982,334.67 | 27,738 |
| Canterbury | 1,785 | 16,658 | \$7,562,262.50 | 18,443 |
| Central | 1,173 | 19,811 | \$8,048,367.45 | 20,984 |
| East Coast | 1,058 | 18,936 | \$7,619,591.54 | 19,994 |
| Nelson | 487 | 9,933 | \$3,925,399.55 | 10,420 |
| Northland | 765 | 21,242 | \$8,550,352.89 | 22,007 |
| Southern | 708 | 15,406 | \$5,522,872.31 | 16,114 |
| Taranaki | 724 | 17,795 | \$6,824,776.68 | 18,519 |
| Waikato | 1,464 | 27,215 | \$11,105,865.30 | 28,679 |
| Wellington | 1,104 | 22,240 | \$8,521,590.06 | 23,344 |
| Other | 879 | 22,878 | \$7,164,429.84 | 23,757 |
| Total (national) | 18,187 | 313,334 | \$127,756,264.78 | 331,521 |

Note:

"Other" refers to those service centres that do not represent a geographic location such as Contact Centres. This is a count of applications granted and declined, not clients. Clients may be counted twice in a period.

Table Four: The number of Advance Payments of Benefit granted and declined, by top three Advance types, by region from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015

| Region | Reason Code | Grants | Declines |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Auckland Metro | Medical and associated costs | 7,559 | 202 |
| | School education costs | 13,241 | 4,443 |
| | Other emergency situations | 73,645 | 159 |
| | All other needs granted | 2,101 | 172 |
| Bay of Plenty | Medical and associated costs | 2,346 | 80 |
| | School education costs | 1,786 | 2,858 |
| | Other emergency situations | 20,089 | 56 |
| | All other needs granted | 453 | 70 |
| Canterbury | Medical and associated costs | 1,830 | 66 |
| | School education costs | 941 | 125 |
| | Other emergency situations | 13,492 | 1,555 |
| | All other needs granted | 395 | 39 |
| Central | Medical and associated costs | 1,838 | 40 |
| | School education costs | 845 | 1,096 |
| | Other emergency situations | 16,731 | 22 |
| | All other needs granted | 397 | 15 |
| East Coast | Medical and associated costs | 1,430 | 36 |
| | School education costs | 1,279 | 984 |
| | Other emergency situations | 15,945 | 19 |
| | All other needs granted | 282 | 19 |
| Nelson | Medical and associated costs | 981 | 28 |
| | School education costs | 466 | 440 |
| | Other emergency situations | 8,292 | 9 |
| | All other needs granted | 194 | 10 |
| Northland | Medical and associated costs | 1,364 | 26 |
| | School education costs | 1,635 | 693 |
| | Other emergency situations | 17,762 | 19 |
| | All other needs granted | 481 | 27 |
| Southern | Medical and associated costs | 1,427 | 32 |
| | School education costs | 810 | 654 |
| | Other emergency situations | 12,712 | 12 |
| | All other needs granted | 457 | 10 |
| Taranaki | Medical and associated costs | 1,538 | 45 |
| | School education costs | 1,689 | 644 |
| | Other emergency situations | 14,188 | 13 |
| | All other needs granted | 380 | 22 |
| Waikato | Medical and associated costs | 2,376 | 68 |
| | School education costs | 1,435 | 28 |
| | Other emergency situations | 22,948 | 1,330 |

| Region | Reason Code | Grants | Declines |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| | All other needs granted | 456 | 38 |
| Wellington | Medical and associated costs | 2,178 | 39 |
| | School education costs | 997 | 24 |
| | Other emergency situations | 18,387 | 1,002 |
| | All other needs granted | 678 | 39 |
| Other | Medical and associated costs | 1,677 | 62 |
| | School education costs | 531 | 16 |
| | Other emergency situations | 20,373 | 782 |
| | All other needs granted | 297 | 19 |
| National | Medical and associated costs | 26,544 | 724 |
| | School education costs | 25,655 | 456 |
| | Other emergency situations | 254,564 | 16,481 |
| | All other needs granted | 6,571 | 526 |
| Total | | 313,334 | 18,187 |

Notes:

"Other" refers to those service centres that do not represent a geographic location such as Contact Centres. This is a count of applications granted and declined, not clients. Clients may be counted twice in a period.

Table Five: The number of Advance Payments of Benefit declined, by reason for decline, by region from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015

| Region | Reason for decline | Declines |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------|
| Auckland Metro | Cash assets/Income exceed limit | 451 |
| | Need can be met in another way | 920 |
| | Not a qualifying need | 439 |
| | All other reasons declined | 3,166 |
| Bay of Plenty | Need can be met in another way | 619 |
| | Not an economic purchase | 305 |
| | Not an emergency situation | 315 |
| | All other reasons declined | 1,825 |
| Canterbury | Need can be met in another way | 219 |
| | Not an emergency situation | 183 |
| | All other reasons declined | 1,156 |
| | Outstanding balance exceeds 6 week limit | 227 |
| Central | Circumstances could have been reasonably foreseen | 122 |
| | Need can be met in another way | 222 |
| | Not an emergency situation | 149 |
| | All other reasons declined | 680 |
| East Coast | Circumstances could have been reasonably foreseen | 121 |
| | Need can be met in another way | 206 |
| | Not an economic purchase | 118 |
| | All other reasons declined | 613 |
| Nelson | Cash assets/Income exceed limit | 56 |
| | Circumstances could have been reasonably foreseen | 62 |
| | Not an emergency situation | 59 |
| | All other reasons declined | 310 |
| Northland | Need can be met in another way | 113 |
| | Not a qualifying need | 69 |
| | Not an economic purchase | 90 |
| | All other reasons declined | 493 |
| Southern | Circumstances could have been reasonably foreseen | 84 |
| | Need can be met in another way | 130 |
| | Not a qualifying need | 68 |
| | All other reasons declined | 426 |
| Taranaki | Need can be met in another way | 102 |
| | Not a qualifying need | 80 |
| | Not an economic purchase | 89 |
| | All other reasons declined | 453 |
| Waikato | Circumstances could have been reasonably foreseen | 143 |
| | Need can be met in another way | 227 |
| | Not an emergency situation | 133 |
| | All other reasons declined | 961 |

| Region | Reason for decline | Declines |
|-------------------|---|-----------------|
| Wellington | Circumstances could have been reasonably foreseen | 97 |
| | Need can be met in another way | 159 |
| | Not an essential need | 114 |
| | All other reasons declined | 734 |
| Other | Cash assets/Income exceed limit | 129 |
| | Need can be met in another way | 93 |
| | Not a qualifying need | 72 |
| | All other reasons declined | 585 |
| National | Need can be met in another way | 3,061 |
| | Not an emergency situation | 1,558 |
| | Not an economic purchase | 1,494 |
| | All other reasons declined | 12,074 |
| Total | | 18,187 |

Notes:

"Other" refers to those service centres that do not represent a geographic location such as Contact Centres. This is a count of applications granted and declined, not clients. Clients may be counted twice in a period.