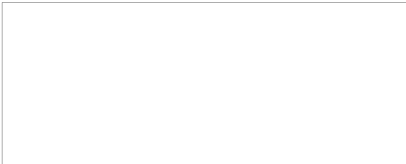




**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

**01 NOV 2016**



Dear

On 20 October 2016 you wrote to the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *The number of people in the South Island that have received an Advance of Benefit payment or other Work and Income assistance to purchase a laptop or tablet.*

Special Needs Grants provide hardship assistance to people where it has been determined by a case manager that an applicant has an immediate need for an essential item or service. This includes requests for hardship for computing equipment such as an iPad, laptop or tablet. Work and Income staff are required to exercise discretion when making decisions in relation to individuals who seek hardship assistance. However, computing equipment is unlikely to be considered an immediate and essential need. More information about Special Needs Grants can be accessed at the following link: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/individuals/a-z-benefits/special-needs-grant.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/individuals/a-z-benefits/special-needs-grant.html)

Special Needs Grants to purchase an electronic device is recorded in notes on individual files and the Ministry reports this information in the category 'other emergency payment'. As at the end of the September quarter 2016, 71,663 Special Needs Grants for 'other' category have been granted. The Ministry would have to manually review thousands of files to be able to provide you with the number of people in the South Island who have received assistance from Work and Income to purchase a laptop or tablet. Your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

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If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact [OIA Requests@msd.govt.nz](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this response. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rachel Sutherland', with a comma at the end.

Rachel Sutherland  
**General Manager**  
**Ministerial and Executive Services**