



12 APR 2017

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On 2 February 2017 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, information about the Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant.

On 1 July 2016, the Ministry introduced a non-recoverable Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (EHSNG). This grant has been made available to people who cannot remain in their usual place of residence, if any, and do not have access to other accommodation which is adequate for them or their family's needs.

Further information regarding EHSNG can be found on the Ministry's website: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/emergency-housing.html

For the sake of clarity I will address each of your questions in turn

- *Can you provide a breakdown of where the 8860 Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant were paid, by region or territorial authority, in the December quarter?*
- *If not, can you provide a detailed reason why you are not able to, and what records you are keeping about the grant?*
- *Can you provide a breakdown of the \$7.7 million spent on the grant in the December quarter, breaking it down by region or territorial authority?*

The table overleaf shows the number of clients and the number and amount of EHSNGs granted, broken down by Work and Income region for the quarter ending 31 December 2016. Note that a client may have received multiple grants during the time period.

The number of Emergency Housing SNGs granted between 1 October and 31 December 2016, broken down by Work and Income region.

Work and Income Region	Clients	Granted Applications	Amount granted
Northland	157	597	\$478,972.68
Auckland Metro	1,123	3,969	\$4,065,970.10
Waikato	236	851	\$885,535.75
Taranaki	32	52	\$26,658.00
Bay of Plenty	151	343	\$252,405.19
East Coast	210	762	\$571,288.55
Central	158	447	\$278,403.50
Wellington	160	394	\$243,322.10
Nelson	129	495	\$394,505.15
Canterbury	162	428	\$247,461.40
Southern	53	94	\$51,789.70
Other	269	428	\$239,475.79
Total	2,616	8,860	\$7,735,787.91

Notes:

- This is amount granted and includes grants that have either expired or been cancelled.
 - Region is based on the Work and Income region where the recommending case manager for the application was based at the time of the grant.
 - The 'Other' region includes grants made for clients from the Centralised Unit Housing service centre, Studylink Processing Centre, National Office and NZ Super service centres.
 - Clients may have been granted Emergency Housing SNGs in multiple regions and as such will be counted in more than one region, however they will only be counted once in the overall total.
- *What is the largest number of grants paid to a single applicant, over a consecutive period, and where were they based?*

An EHSNG can be approved for one night or up to seven nights depending on the client's circumstances. The Client Management System in which this information is recorded, is unable to produce reporting that shows the number of consecutive grants approved. For example, a client can be approved for one Emergency Housing SNG of three nights, then stay somewhere else for one night and then return to receive another Emergency Housing SNG for another five nights. This information is accessible to Case Managers when assessing applications and assisting individuals, but cannot be reported without significant manual analysis and collation. However, in the interest of providing you with a better understanding of the nature of need for emergency housing assistance, I can advise that the client who received the highest number of EHSNG payments in the December 2016 quarter received 18 grants over that three month period.

To identify the number of consecutive EHSNGs a client has received, Ministry staff would need to manually review each client file and assess the notes recorded by the case manager. Regardless, I am willing to consider dedicating the resource necessary to collate and report this information. However, before doing so, it would be helpful if you were able to confirm that you did indeed require information about the highest number of EHSNGs granted consecutively in the December 2016 quarter, as opposed to the cumulative total provided above.

- *Can you provide any correspondence between social development minister Anne Tolley and MSD staff regarding the Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant, specifically the record-keeping MSD are undertaking around it?*

I note that Minister Tolley is not the Minister responsible for Social Housing; that portfolio is currently held by Hon Amy Adams. Nevertheless, I have undertaken a thorough search of any correspondence between the Minister for Social Development, Hon Anne Tolley, and MSD staff regarding record keeping for EHSNG, and have not found any correspondence that falls within scope of your request. As such this part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act.

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 and any attached documents available to the wider public shortly. 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.

If you still require information around the highest number of consecutive grants of the EHSNG in the December 2016 quarter or wish to discuss this response regarding EHSNGs with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response, 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.

Yours sincerely



Scott Gallacher
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