



27 APR 2017

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On 14 February 2017 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, information relating to the number of families billeted in alternative accommodation such as motels in Northland and how much it has cost the Ministry.

You will appreciate the complexities of emergency housing, particularly as places are limited or already at capacity. For context, as at the end of December 2016 there were 63 applications on the social housing register in the Far North District, six in Kaipara District, and 150 in Whangarei District. The Ministry must consider other housing options for people who require assistance and, in some cases, motels or hotels may be the only viable option available at the time that meets the immediate need of a person's or a family's circumstances.

As of 1 July 2016, the Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (SNG) was made available to people who for various reasons, cannot remain in their usual place of residence, if any, and will not have access to other accommodation which is adequate for their or their family's needs. Through the use of emergency housing SNGs, the Ministry has assisted thousands of vulnerable families and individuals in these types of situations.

Work and Income staff do not 'place' people into commercial accommodation, however, when there are no spaces available with contracted emergency housing providers, Ministry staff provide options, advice and financial assistance to secure appropriate and cost effective commercial accommodation. The final decision of where to stay remains with the individual and their family.

Further information regarding Emergency Housing SNGs is available on the Ministry's website: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-need-s-grant/emergency-housing.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-need-s-grant/emergency-housing.html)

I can advise that between 1 July and 30 September 2016 the Ministry approved approximately \$215,000 for 300 Emergency Housing SNGs to 110 clients in the Northland Work and Income region. Also, between 1 October and 31 December 2016 the Ministry granted a further \$478,972.68 for 597 Emergency Housing SNGs to 157 clients in the Northland Work and Income region.

Minister Adams recently responded to some Written Parliamentary Questions (WPQ) on the Emergency Housing SNG and I provide this link as additional context for your request: [www.parliament.nz/en/pb/order-paper-questions/written-questions/document/QWA\\_](http://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/order-paper-questions/written-questions/document/QWA_)

00121\_2017/121-2017-louisa-wall-to-the-minister-for-social-housing.

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 have any further questions, please feel free to contact [OIA\\_Requests@msd.govt.nz](mailto: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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



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