



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

13 JAN 2017

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On 29 November 2016 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, information about total hardship payments for Timaru, Waimate, Mackenzie and Oamaru.

Work and Income, a service line of the Ministry of Social Development, provides hardship assistance to help people pay for essential items or services they need urgently.

Hardship assistance includes Advances, Recoverable Assistance Payments and Special Needs Grants:

- Advances are recoverable payments available to people receiving a main benefit who require assistance to meet a particular immediate need for an essential item.
- Recoverable Assistance Payments are recoverable financial assistance to non-beneficiaries to meet essential immediate needs for specific items or services.
- Special Needs Grants provide non-taxable, one-off recoverable or non-recoverable financial assistance to people to meet immediate needs.

More information about hardship assistance is available on Work and Income's website at: www.workandincome.govt.nz/individuals/how-we-can-help-you/dont-have-enough-income.html

Further information regarding benefit and hardship payments is available on the Ministry's website. The Benefit Fact Sheets provide a high-level view of trends in benefit information over the past five years. The Fact Sheets present numbers and characteristics of clients in receipt of benefits at the end of the current quarter and for the equivalent quarter one year ago and five years ago. You will note Work and Income divides New Zealand into 11 Regions. The Benefit Fact Sheets are available at: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/benefit/

You have requested the following data:

- *Total hardship payments made and total dollar value broken down by quarter back to June 2015 for the areas Timaru, Waimate, Mackenzie and Oamaru. Data to be broken down as per benefit fact sheet categories:*
 - *food, accommodation related, medical and associated costs, people affected by benefit stand downs, electricity and gas, school education costs, re-establishment grants, driver licence, health related, and other.*

The Ministry's hardship data is reported based on the Service Centre the client is assigned to and not their physical address. Therefore, clients in Waimate and Mackenzie will fall into either the Timaru or Oamaru Service Centres.

As such, your request for the payments to be broken down by the Waimate and Mackenzie areas is refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act as this information does not exist.

Please find enclosed a table that shows the number and dollar value of hardship grants granted, broken down by reason, for the Timaru and Oamaru Work and Income Service Centres, between 1 April 2015 and 30 September 2016.

The Ministry records the reasons as to why a hardship grant is paid. When a Case Manager cannot attribute the reason for the grant they must choose 'other' and enter a detailed description on the individual's case file.

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 after ten working days. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter and attachment 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 wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding total hardship payments for Timaru, Waimate, Mackenzie and Oamaru, 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ruth Bound', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Ruth Bound
Deputy Chief Executive, Service Delivery

Table One: The number and total dollar value of hardship grants granted, broken down by reason, for the Timaru and Oamaru Work and Income Service Centres, between 1 April 2015 and 30 September 2016.

Quarter	Reason Group	Service Centre Site					
		Timaru		Oamaru		Total	
		Grants	Amount	Grants	Amount	Grants	Amount
June 2015	Accommodation Related	95	\$56,082.79	70	\$41,353.28	165	\$97,436.07
	Driver Licence	S	\$2,367.30	S	\$319.50	27	\$2,686.80
	Electricity and Gas	43	\$18,432.55	20	\$12,989.24	63	\$31,421.79
	Food	623	\$67,017.63	321	\$39,308.63	944	\$106,326.26
	Health Related	11	\$925.50	19	\$2,395.50	30	\$3,321.00
	Medical and associated costs	141	\$44,600.30	93	\$28,179.00	234	\$72,779.30
	Re-establishment Grants	S	\$2,045.33	S	\$1,313.10	10	\$3,358.43
	School Education Costs	S	\$4,574.25	S	\$250.18	27	\$4,824.43
	Other	513	\$129,589.08	199	\$50,262.26	712	\$179,851.34
	Total	1,481	\$325,634.73	731	\$176,370.69	2,212	\$502,005.42
September 2015	Accommodation Related	145	\$81,543.59	88	\$49,354.40	233	\$130,897.99
	People Affected by Benefit Stand Downs	S	\$175.10	S	\$325.59	S	\$500.69
	Driver Licence	28	\$2,821.80	6	\$459.60	34	\$3,281.40
	Electricity and Gas	48	\$22,589.99	41	\$23,554.95	89	\$46,144.94
	Food	620	\$67,763.29	351	\$44,521.05	971	\$112,284.34
	Health Related	10	\$492.50	22	\$2,791.99	32	\$3,284.49
	Medical and associated costs	160	\$54,624.43	123	\$37,231.78	283	\$91,856.21
	Re-establishment Grants	S	\$665.20	S	\$1,730.90	S	\$2,396.10
	School Education Costs	S	\$3,462.71	S	\$347.00	25	\$3,809.71
	Other	451	\$110,144.18	188	\$53,765.78	639	\$163,909.96
	Total	1,487	\$344,282.79	830	\$214,083.04	2,317	\$558,365.83
December 2015	Accommodation Related	168	\$94,803.59	42	\$26,946.63	210	\$121,750.22
	Driver Licence	19	\$2,172.30	6	\$579.00	25	\$2,751.30
	Electricity and Gas	63	\$30,980.41	39	\$17,538.13	102	\$48,518.54
	Food	630	\$68,104.97	224	\$27,457.00	854	\$95,561.97
	Health Related	19	\$1,403.00	10	\$1,008.00	29	\$2,411.00
	Medical and associated costs	194	\$64,883.25	91	\$27,182.00	285	\$92,065.25
	Re-establishment Grants	S	\$1,014.80	S	\$696.10	S	\$1,710.90
	School Education Costs	S	\$2,019.19	S	\$172.50	S	\$2,191.69
	Other	349	\$91,378.23	112	\$27,042.66	461	\$118,420.89
	Total	1,457	\$356,759.74	527	\$128,622.02	1,984	\$485,381.76

Quarter	Reason Group	Service Centre Site					
		Timaru		Oamaru		Total	
		Grants	Amount	Grants	Amount	Grants	Amount
March 2016	Accommodation Related	158	\$92,490.61	63	\$43,291.96	221	\$135,782.57
	Driver Licence	S	\$3,336.60	S	\$566.90	37	\$3,903.50
	Electricity and Gas	33	\$15,568.15	13	\$8,163.95	46	\$23,732.10
	Food	642	\$71,662.90	205	\$26,498.26	847	\$98,161.16
	Health Related	S	\$319.00	S	\$407.00	S	\$726.00
	Medical and associated costs	164	\$58,957.00	73	\$16,696.50	237	\$75,653.50
	Re-establishment Grants	S	\$1,675.04	S	\$345.80	S	\$2,020.84
	School Education Costs	98	\$15,315.26	33	\$5,734.20	131	\$21,049.46
	Other	326	\$79,481.46	119	\$36,469.83	445	\$115,951.29
	Total	1,463	\$338,806.02	519	\$138,174.40	1,982	\$476,980.42
June 2016	Accommodation Related	199	\$106,991.09	63	\$41,634.51	262	\$148,625.60
	People Affected by Benefit Stand Downs	S	\$162.99	S	\$550.30	S	\$713.29
	Driver Licence	S	\$2,692.60	S	\$454.70	31	\$3,147.30
	Electricity and Gas	44	\$21,688.23	15	\$9,670.58	59	\$31,358.81
	Food	604	\$68,688.20	198	\$24,811.12	802	\$93,499.32
	Health Related	8	\$788.20	9	\$824.00	17	\$1,612.20
	Medical and associated costs	180	\$67,025.83	53	\$12,374.00	233	\$79,399.83
	Re-establishment Grants	S	\$1,543.70	S	\$996.20	S	\$2,539.90
	School Education Costs	S	\$3,723.24	S	\$136.50	29	\$3,859.74
	Other	571	\$144,963.63	159	\$46,439.25	730	\$191,402.88
Total	1,666	\$418,267.71	509	\$137,891.16	2,175	\$556,158.87	
September 2016	Accommodation Related	180	\$112,507.43	66	\$42,888.13	246	\$155,395.56
	People Affected by Benefit Stand Downs	S	\$280.10	0	\$0.00	S	\$280.10
	Driver Licence	26	\$2,839.40	10	\$997.00	36	\$3,836.40
	Electricity and Gas	66	\$32,753.43	37	\$27,529.57	103	\$60,283.00
	Food	623	\$69,674.81	168	\$21,066.00	791	\$90,740.81
	Health Related	S	\$471.00	S	\$1,703.50	17	\$2,174.50
	Medical and associated costs	160	\$56,026.60	69	\$21,993.00	229	\$78,019.60
	Re-establishment Grants	S	\$3,168.85	S	\$599.95	S	\$3,768.80
	School Education Costs	12	\$2,511.26	0	\$0.00	12	\$2,511.26
	Other	493	\$121,994.04	140	\$36,121.60	633	\$158,115.64
Total	1,575	\$402,226.92	505	\$152,898.75	2,080	\$555,125.67	

Notes:

- Hardship payments consist of Special Needs Grants, Recoverable Assistance Payments and Advance of Main Benefit.
- The table shows a count of grants. A client can have more than one hardship grant in a period.
- 'S' represents a suppressed figure in order to protect the privacy of natural persons, in accordance with section 9(2)(a) of the Act. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information.