



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

14 JUL 2017

Dear

On 14 June 2017 emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the number of people who are currently in motels in the city of Palmerston North who are on the Social Housing Register.

You will appreciate the complexities of emergency housing, particularly as places are limited or already at capacity, and the demand for affordable social housing is high. 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.

The Ministry contracts emergency housing places and staff endeavour to place eligible clients with an urgent need in these places as a first option. Where that is not possible, and where there is eligibility, the Ministry is able to meet the cost of temporary accommodation, such as motels or hotels, through the Emergency Housing SNG.

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

I can advise that as at the end of March 2017, there were 17 people on the Social Housing register in the Palmerston North Territorial Authority who also received an Emergency Housing SNG in the 14 days prior to 31 March 2017.

As noted above, motels and other commercial accommodation are only used when all other options are exhausted to provide a short-term solution for those in need, while the Ministry works to make more contracted emergency housing places available. The Ministry is tasked with supporting New Zealanders who need help with housing, and the emergency housing Special Needs Grant allows the Ministry to immediately

immediately help people who are in urgent need. While increasing the affordable housing supply is one of the key objectives of the Social Housing Reform Programme, building new houses will not remove the need for immediate provision of safe, healthy accommodation for those in urgent need.

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 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, 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
Deputy Chief Executive, Housing