



12 SEP 2017

Dear

On 14 August 2017, the Ministry received your letter requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *Can you please provide the number of funeral grant applications received and granted by region , by average amount applied for and paid for the year 2016 and 2017 Year to Date.*

The Ministry provides Funeral Grants to help those who have no other means to meet the costs of a funeral. A Funeral Grant assists people with actual and reasonable funeral costs only and is not designed to cover all funeral expenses. It is income and asset tested and eligibility takes into consideration whether the deceased person has a surviving partner or dependent child or if the deceased is a child. Please note that the maximum Funeral Grant that can be paid to meet funeral expenses was increased to \$2030.91 as at 1 April 2017.

Further information on the eligibility criteria for a Funeral Grant can be found on Work and Income's website: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/individuals/a-z-benefits/funeral-grant.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/individuals/a-z-benefits/funeral-grant.html)

Please find enclosed a table showing the number of funeral grant applications processed (made up of grants and declines) and the total and average amount granted between January 2016 to June 2017, by calander year and region.

While the Ministry can provide the number of Funeral Grant applications declined, the Ministry does not centrally record the dollar amount that was declined, this information is recorded on the individual's case file. In order to provide you with the average dollar amount applied for (made up of dollar amounts granted and dollar amounts declined), Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of individual case files. As such your request for this information 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.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

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).

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding Funeral Grants, 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'EB', written in a cursive style.

Elisabeth Brunt  
**General Manager, Ministerial and Executive Services**

The number of Funeral Grant applications received (grants and declines), and the total and average amount granted between January 2016 to June 2017, by calendar year and region.

Period	Work and Income region	Number of grants	Number of declines	Number of applications received	Total amount granted	Mean average amount granted
2016 Calendar Year	Northland	269	55	324	\$505,916	\$1,881
	Auckland Metro	1,171	225	1,396	\$2,202,528	\$1,881
	Waikato	436	138	574	\$801,749	\$1,839
	Taranaki	202	41	243	\$382,614	\$1,894
	Bay of Plenty	411	133	544	\$749,792	\$1,824
	East Coast	198	54	252	\$378,466	\$1,911
	Central	220	58	278	\$404,374	\$1,838
	Wellington	336	46	382	\$647,817	\$1,928
	Nelson	141	39	180	\$262,814	\$1,864
	Canterbury	415	185	600	\$767,253	\$1,849
	Southern	281	138	419	\$508,194	\$1,809
	Other	384	204	588	\$687,522	\$1,790
	<b>New Zealand</b>	<b>4,464</b>	<b>1,316</b>	<b>5,780</b>	<b>\$8,299,040</b>	<b>\$1,859</b>
January to June 2017	Northland	112	19	131	\$212,849	\$1,900
	Auckland Metro	563	96	659	\$1,082,296	\$1,922
	Waikato	157	38	195	\$298,746	\$1,903
	Taranaki	90	23	113	\$176,416	\$1,960
	Bay of Plenty	202	50	252	\$378,432	\$1,873
	East Coast	109	23	132	\$208,457	\$1,912
	Central	112	29	141	\$200,765	\$1,793
	Wellington	97	21	118	\$182,301	\$1,879
	Nelson	103	27	130	\$189,469	\$1,840
	Canterbury	147	42	189	\$276,239	\$1,879
	Southern	191	104	295	\$356,529	\$1,867
	Other	359	181	540	\$632,365	\$1,761
	<b>New Zealand</b>	<b>2,242</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>2,895</b>	<b>\$4,194,862</b>	<b>\$1,871</b>

**Notes:**

- Applications processed include both applications granted and applications declined.
- This is the number of funeral grant applications processed, not the number of clients.
- A client may have more than one application processed in the reported period.
- A Funeral Grant is generally processed through the deceased record or deceased children through the parent's, guardian's or primary caregiver's record.