



05 FEB 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

On 20 December 2017, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, information regarding the relocation assistance grant since 1 January 2017.

Relocation from Auckland Assistance (RAAA) was a one-off payment of up to \$5,000 to relocate from Auckland. Established in June 2016, it aimed to provide practical assistance to enable people to expand their employment and housing options outside of Auckland and alleviate the increasing pressure on the Auckland housing market. This was a voluntary scheme available to those living in Auckland and either a current tenant of or eligible for public housing. On 18 December 2017, the Minister for Housing and Urban Development, Hon. Phil Twyford, announced that RAAA will be stopped from 15 January 2018 after increases in public housing need in other towns and cities showed it was just moving housing pressure to other parts of the country.

The Ministry offers a range of assistance through the Housing Support Products to help clients overcome the barriers of moving into private housing. This includes assistance such as bond grants, letting fees assistance and rent in advance. Information regarding the full range of assistance available is accessible the Ministry's website: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/housing-support-products/index.html

For the sake of clarity each question will be addressed in turn.

- *How many WINZ clients have been granted a 'relocation assistance grant? Can you please break down the list by region moved from to region moved to.*

The table below shows the number of households that have been granted a RAAA grant between 1 January 2017 and 31 December 2017, broken down by the Work and Income region they relocated to.

Region	Number of households
Bay of Plenty	37
Canterbury	28
Central	20
East Coast	24
Nelson	S
Northland	82
Southern	S
Taranaki	32
Waikato	100
Wellington	20
Total	365

Note:

- In order to protect client privacy some values are suppressed and are represented by 'S'.

- *How many clients has WINZ asked to pay back their relocation grant? Can you please break down why WINZ asked these clients to repay their grants. Can you also please break down these clients by region moved from to.*

If people return to the Social Housing Register in the Auckland region within a 52-week period without exceptional circumstances, or if they use the payment for purposes other than those intended, they may be required to pay the grant back.

Of the 365 households who were granted RFAA, nine households were asked to repay the grant. These clients received the RFAA to relocate across six regions, and as the number of clients per region is low, the exact regions are withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act in order to protect the privacy of natural persons. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information.

- *How many WINZ clients have broken the terms of their original grant agreement but WINZ has not asked them to pay back their grant? Can you please break down why WINZ didn't ask these clients to repay their grants?*

I can advise you that one person was considered to have exceptional circumstances for moving back to Auckland, as such they were not required to repay the RFAA. Exceptional circumstances are regarded to be unforeseen and beyond the clients control, and it is determined on a case by case basis.

Additional information regarding RFAA and examples of exceptional circumstances is available on the Ministry's website: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/housing-support-products/relocation-from-auckland-assistance/introduction.html

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 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 concerning Relocation from Auckland Assistance, 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 blue ink, appearing to read 'Scott Gallacher', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Scott Gallacher
Deputy Chief Executive, Housing