



25 JUL 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

On 12 June 2018, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the number of fruit pickers in the Bay of Plenty who have sought financial assistance from Work and Income in the last three years.

On 6 July 2018, you refined your request to include the following information:

- *The number of Seasonal Work Assistance grants issued in the Bay of Plenty Work and Income region in the last three years (from the quarter ending March 2015 to March 2018).*

Seasonal Work Assistance (SWA) is granted to seasonal workers who are no longer receiving a benefit and have lost wages because of work missed due to bad weather. In the Bay of Plenty region, most Work and Income clients who take up seasonal work are horticultural workers employed as packers, stackers or graders.

Please find below a table that shows the number of SWA grants issued in the Bay of Plenty Work and Income region between 31 March 2015 and 31 March 2018, broken down by quarter.

<b>Quarter ending</b>	<b>Number of SWA grants</b>
March 2015	187
June 2015	383
September 2015	342
December 2015	235
March 2016	507
June 2016	481
September 2016	402
December 2016	308
March 2017	164
June 2017	387
September 2017	451
December 2017	243
March 2018	581

Notes:

- This table represents a count of grants, not clients.
- A client may have been granted Seasonal Work Assistance more than once.

The fluctuations in the number of SWA grants shown in the above table are tied to adverse weather events and the unpredictability of weather conditions. For example, there was a cyclone that hit the Bay of Plenty in March 2018 which may have affected the number of SWA granted.

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Further information regarding the SWA is available here:  
[www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/seasonal-work-assistance.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/seasonal-work-assistance.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 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](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,



Cassandra Wise  
**Manager, Issue Resolution, Service Delivery**