



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

18 JUN 2018



Dear 

On 11 May 2018, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *For my Parliamentary research could I request the total numbers of Community Services Card holders on an annual basis since its introduction to the most recent year available please. Could I also have the figures broken down by Maori and non-Maori on an annual basis too please.*

The Ministry administers the Community Services Card (CSC) which entitles the holder to higher subsidies for visits to a doctor outside of their primary health organisation, after-hours doctor visits and other health services provided by hospitals including emergency dental care. Further information regarding CSC including eligibility criteria is available from the Work and Income website here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/community-services-card.html.

Enclosed is a table that shows the number of CSC holders between the years 1997 and 2018 as at 31 March, broken down by year and card holder ethnicity.

Although CSCs were introduced on 1 February 1992, CSCs on issue can only be reported back to June 1996 due to system limitations. In order to provide you with the number of CSCs issued between 1992 and 1996 as at the end of March, broken down by year and card holder ethnicity, Ministry staff would have to manually review notes held on over 800,000 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.

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.


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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 and attachments 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 regarding Community Services Card holders, 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of the initials 'PP' followed by a stylized name that appears to be 'Cassandra Wise'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cassandra Wise
Manager, Issue Resolution, Service Delivery

The number of Community Services Card holders between the years 1997 and 2018 as at 31 March, broken down by year and card holder ethnicity.

Year Ending 31 March	Māori	Pacific Peoples	NZ European	Unspecified	Other	Total
1997	120,494	38,907	328,768	503,916	68,963	1,061,048
1998	134,524	44,356	389,495	441,778	84,972	1,095,125
1999	143,608	47,969	419,947	403,393	95,309	1,110,226
2000	144,879	48,980	426,153	360,629	99,928	1,080,569
2001	147,851	51,611	442,461	341,428	107,740	1,091,091
2002	162,463	52,120	456,323	277,683	122,432	1,071,021
2003	162,253	53,213	445,945	247,010	146,857	1,055,278
2004	159,919	51,872	440,722	238,739	153,128	1,044,380
2005	150,395	48,531	417,958	223,855	145,935	986,674
2006	150,405	48,828	418,675	212,370	146,838	977,116
2007	148,628	48,778	420,246	206,959	148,947	973,558
2008	145,946	47,871	407,699	202,089	145,635	949,240
2009	156,035	51,489	415,209	196,921	150,385	970,039
2010	174,028	57,643	441,486	190,740	161,542	1,025,439
2011	177,224	56,536	436,088	174,577	162,400	1,006,825
2012	177,764	55,895	428,237	158,180	164,050	984,126
2013	172,716	54,232	408,114	144,888	157,009	936,959
2014	169,277	52,093	392,702	133,211	153,600	900,883
2015	167,666	50,731	381,603	120,914	150,187	871,101
2016	166,466	51,814	357,708	122,308	156,353	854,649
2017	164,432	49,546	345,242	123,557	148,517	831,294
2018	163,565	47,997	337,323	126,561	143,033	818,479

Notes:

- Ethnicity details recorded in the Ministry's systems have been gathered under a variety of classification schemes as clients came into contact with the Ministry.
- Ethnicity data is self-identified. A client may nominate multiple ethnicities as fits their preference or self-concept. However, when the Ministry reports on this data people are grouped by a single ethnicity based on standard Ministry practice. Ethnic groups do not currently align with Statistics New Zealand ethnicity groupings.