



13 NOV 2018



Dear 

On 9 October 2018, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *How much money has been spent on emergency housing in Southland since January 2013 to date, and what parts of the region the housing is and what kind e.g. houses, motels.*

On 16 October 2018 you were advised that your request had been interpreted to refer specifically to expenditure on Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (SNGs).

The Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) helps those with nowhere to stay. Anyone who urgently needs somewhere to stay tonight, or within the next seven days, can call 0800 559 009. The Ministry can help with rent arrears, with referral to transitional housing providers, and with payments towards temporary accommodation.

The Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development work to ensure people have their immediate housing needs met. Temporary accommodation is primarily provided in the form of transitional housing and Emergency Housing SNGs.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development works with a range of non-governmental organisations to provide transitional housing services. The Ministry contracts these providers to ensure access to appropriate short term accommodation as a stepping stone to long-term, sustainable housing.

When all transitional housing places are full, the Ministry can help meet the cost of short-term accommodation with a Special Needs Grant. The Emergency Housing SNG was introduced on 1 July 2016 in order to fund temporary accommodation at places such as hostels and motels to meet people's immediate housing needs. In most cases, this does not need to be paid back.

Prior to the 2016 December quarter, emergency housing grants were coded in the Ministry's IT system as 'other emergency grants', which includes hardship grants for various other emergency reasons. The Ministry cannot disaggregate emergency housing hardship payments from other types of assistance granted under the 'other emergency grants' category and any information regarding emergency housing grant payments prior to the December 2016 quarter is recorded in notes on individual case files. As such, this part of your request 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 more fully 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.

However, the Ministry can provide the value of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants from the December 2016 quarter to the end of September 2018. Please find attached a table providing the value of these grants by year and accommodation type.

The location of Emergency Housing SNGs is centrally recorded by the site at which it was issued. There are 2 Work and Income sites in Southland: Gore and Invercargill.

Two very low figures have been suppressed in the table in order to protect the privacy of natural persons. This information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information.

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 regarding Emergency Housing SNGs in Southland, 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



Cassandra Wise
Manager, Issue Resolution, Service Delivery

Total value of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants issued in Southland by accommodation type and site of issue.

Site	Accommodation type	Number of grants	Value of grants
Invercargill	Hostel	60	\$23,594.00
	Holiday park/ Camp ground	141	\$87,020.00
	Motel/ Hotel	266	\$166,908.50
	Subtotal	467	\$277,522.50
Gore	Hostel	S	\$510.00
	Holiday park/ Camp ground	S	\$1,185.00
	Motel/ Hotel	109	\$83,003.00
	Subtotal	117	\$84,698.00
Total		584	\$362,220.50

Note:

- A client may have more than one grant during the period specified.
- The site recorded is that where the recommending case manager for the application was based at the time of grant.
- Data includes the period from September 2016 quarter to 30 September 2018.
- "S" represents a number that has been suppressed in order to protect the privacy of natural persons.