



15 NOV 2018



Dear 

On 1 October 2018, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

1. *How many people had their benefits cancelled over the past 10 years in the Waikato?*
 - *Could they please be broken down into years?*
 - *What were the reasons for the benefits being cancelled?*
 - *Could they please be broken down into gender?*
2. *Could I please also get the number of people that were on the benefit for those years in the Waikato?*

Over the last decade, there have been a number of significant changes to New Zealand's Social Welfare System including, multiple benefit types being replaced by three new benefit categories and the introduction of new work obligations. You will see from the enclosed information that as at the end of June 2018, the number of working age main benefit clients in the Waikato region was the lowest of any of the last ten years.

Further information about the changes to the Social Welfare System over the last decade, particularly the Future Focus package and Welfare Reform programme changes, is available on the Ministry's website at:

- www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/regulatory-impact-statements/future-focus.html
- www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/corporate/annual-report/2012-2013/more-people-into-work-and-out-of-welfare-dependency.html

Please find enclosed the following three tables:

- Table One shows the number of working age main benefit cancellations for the Waikato region for the financial years 2008/09 to 2017/18, broken down by the Benefit Fact Sheet reason group for cancellation.
- Table Two shows the number of working age main benefit cancellations for the Waikato region for the financial years 2008/09 to 2017/18, broken down by gender.

- Table Three shows the number of working age main benefit clients in the Waikato region as at the end of June in the years 2009 to 2018, broken down by benefit group.

In order to protect client privacy, some values are suppressed and are represented by 'S'. The Ministry is unable to provide you with the exact number as releasing this information is likely to risk identifying the individuals concerned. As such, this information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information.

Information regarding the number of working age main benefit clients can also be found on the Benefit Fact Sheets which are publically available on the Ministry's website here: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/benefit/.

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 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, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response concerning benefit cancellations in the Waikato region, 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

Table 1: Number of working age main benefit cancellations for the Waikato region for the financial years 2008/09 to 2017/18, broken down by Benefit Fact Sheet reason group for cancellation.

Reason group	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Total
Obtained work	4,564	7,138	7,801	7,186	6,278	7,073	6,872	7,182	7,995	8,522	70,611
Transferred to another benefit	4,759	5,655	5,460	7,155	6,419	2,866	2,344	1,928	1,987	1,833	40,406
52 week reapplication/ annual review	159	111	376	439	437	588	620	576	565	509	4,380
Full time student	677	1,179	1,127	1,014	969	1,115	982	901	769	719	9,452
No further medical coverage provided	889	942	1,013	954	882	661	485	440	472	309	7,047
Left New Zealand	386	477	628	496	692	652	600	488	507	365	5,291
Failed obligations/ to recomply	673	930	986	1,175	964	693	712	583	438	453	7,607
Imprisonment	361	443	465	411	438	400	409	471	522	518	4,438
Excess income/ Assets	156	215	136	118	177	202	154	109	99	69	1,435
Other	2,262	2,664	2,758	2,690	2,568	2,278	2,091	1,894	1,695	1,419	22,319
Total	14,886	19,754	20,750	21,638	19,824	16,528	15,269	14,572	15,049	14,716	172,986

Table 2: Number of working age main benefit cancellations for the Waikato region for the financial years 2008/09 to 2017/18, broken down by gender.

Gender	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Total
Female	7,319	8,708	9,068	9,319	9,045	8,177	7,666	7,209	7,546	7,473	81,530
Male	7,567	11,046	11,682	12,319	10,779	8,351	7,603	7,363	7,503	7,243	91,456
Total	14,886	19,754	20,750	21,638	19,824	16,528	15,269	14,572	15,049	14,716	172,986

Table 3: Number of working age main benefit clients in the Waikato region as at the end of June, in the years 2009 to 2018, broken down by benefit group.

Benefit group	As at June									
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Domestic Purposes related benefits	8,749	9,652	9,928	9,926	9,222	0	0	0	0	0
Emergency Benefit	S	S	S	S	288	164	134	110	105	86
Emergency Maintenance Allowance	0	0	0	0	0	175	96	78	67	53
Invalid's Benefit	7,038	7,223	7,209	7,171	7,143	0	0	0	0	0
Job Search Allowance and Independent Youth Benefit	S	S	S	S	0	0	0	0	0	0
Job Seeker Student Hardship	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	S	S
Job Seeker related	0	0	0	0	0	9,826	10,085	10,673	10,712	10,965
Sickness Benefit and Sickness Benefit Hardship	3,860	4,525	4,413	4,641	4,606	0	0	0	0	0
Sole Parent Support	0	0	0	0	0	6,513	6,219	6,122	5,771	5,486
Supported Living Payments related	0	0	0	0	0	7,983	8,159	8,017	8,038	7,906
Unemployment Benefit (in Training) and Unemployment Benefit Hardship (in Training)	584	530	551	722	352	0	0	0	0	0
Unemployment Benefit and Unemployment Benefit Hardship	3,919	4,006	3,277	2,874	3,548	0	0	0	0	0
Widow's Benefit	401	415	416	410	346	0	0	0	0	0
Youth Payment and Young Parent Payment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	S	S
Total	24,778	26,629	26,081	25,987	25,505	24,661	24,693	25,000	24,695	24,500

Notes for all tables:

- The data includes working age clients only (18 to 64 years).
- Main Benefits exclude New Zealand Superannuation, Veteran's Pension, Non-Beneficiary assistance, Orphan's Benefit and Unsupported Child's Benefit.
- The data in tables one and two is a number of cancellations not a number of clients. A client may have more than one cancellation during any reported period.
- The reason group corresponds to the Benefit Fact Sheet cancellation reason which is reported quarterly.
- Introduction to new benefit categories with Welfare Reform changes on 15 July 2013 resulted in a benefit migration. This reflects on numbers of grants, cancellations and transfers.
- The Ministry has excluded a large number of cancellations occurring on 13 July 2013 with reason code 'Transferred' when clients were administratively cancelled and transferred to the new benefit system.
- 'S' represents cells suppressed to protect client's privacy.