



Dear [REDACTED]

On 23 January 2019, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, a range of information relating to emergency hardship assistance in the South Waikato area. This was later refined by you to mean the Tokoroa Service Centre.

Special Needs Grants provide financial assistance to meet immediate, essential needs. The grant is non-taxable and a person does not need to be receiving a benefit to qualify for a Special Needs Grant. Sometimes the grant needs to be repaid and sometimes it does not. Special Needs Grants can be used to meet a range of needs, Emergency Housing and food are two of these.

Further information about Special Needs Grants for food and Emergency Housing can be found at the following links on the Work and Income website:

- www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/food-01.html
- <http://housing.msd.govt.nz/housing-options/emergency-housing.html#HelpwithemergencyhousingcostsEmergencyHousingSpecialNeedsGrant>

Your questions are addressed in turn below:

- *Number of applications and applicants for food grants in South Waikato and number declined for the years 2009-2018 inclusive and the same data for the whole of NZ.*

Please find enclosed table one which shows the number of Special Needs Grant applications for food granted and declined for the years 2013 to 2018 in Tokoroa and nationally.

The Ministry's reporting capabilities were improved from the 2013 calendar year. The Ministry is unable to provide data about applications for Special Needs Grants for food broken down by whether they were granted or declined for the 2009 to 2012 calendar years without the creation of new reporting or manually reviewing client files. As such, your request is partially refused under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

Throughout the response where parts of your request have been refused under section 18(f) of the Act, it has been considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. It is concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

- *Reasons provided for declining food grants in South Waikato for the calendar year 2018 and the same data for all of NZ.*

Please find enclosed table two which shows the reasons for declining food grants in all of New Zealand and at the Tokoroa Service Centre in the 2018 calendar year

- *Numbers of clients referred to charitable organisations when food grants are declined for South Waikato and the same data for all of NZ.*

When someone asks Work and Income for emergency assistance to buy food, Work and Income will make sure that they are receiving their full and correct entitlement. This includes reviewing their benefit rate and debt recovery offsets and considering their eligibility to other supplementary assistance. If the person has no further entitlement to assistance and does not qualify for a Special Needs Grant for food, Work and Income will decline the application and provide a list of community agencies that may be able to assist.

The Ministry is unable to answer your question regarding the number of clients referred to charitable organisations following being declined for a food grant as it is held in notes on individual case files. In order to provide you with this information Ministry staff would have to manually review the files of all clients who were declined a food grant. As such this request is refused request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

- *Numbers of requests for emergency housing in South Waikato for the years 2009 to 2018 inclusive and the same data for all of NZ.*

The Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant was introduced on 1 July 2016. Data for the first quarter that this grant was available is not in a format that allows ad-hoc reporting. As such, data is only available from October 2016. Providing the number of requests for emergency housing prior to this time would require substantial manual collation as individual files would need to be reviewed. As such, your request for this information is refused under section 18(f) of the Act.

Please find enclosed table three which shows the number of Special Needs Grant applications for Emergency Housing from October 2016 to the end of the 2018 calendar year for the Tokoroa Service Centre and nationally, broken down by whether the application was approved or declined.

Please also find enclosed table four which shows the number of clients who received a Special Needs Grant for Emergency Housing over the same time period for the Tokoroa Service Centre and nationally.

- *Ethnicity of those declined for food grants and emergency accommodation in South Waikato in the calendar year 2018 and the same data for all of NZ.*

Please find enclosed table five which shows the Ethnicity of those declined for Food and Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants, nationally and in Tokoroa in the 2018 calendar year.

- *Numbers of beneficiaries with dependent children and without dependent children declined food grants and requests for emergency accommodation in South Waikato for the years 2009 to 2018 inclusive and the same data for all of NZ.*

The number of children included in an application for a Special Needs Grant for food or Emergency Housing is held on the individual client record, and cannot be reported on electronically without the creation of new reporting, which would require a significant amount of resource. As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act. In order to provide you with this information Ministry staff would have to manually review the files of all clients who were declined a food grant and who applied for an Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

- *Type of emergency accommodation provided to beneficiaries in South Waikato in the calendar year 2018 and the same data for all of NZ.*

Please find enclosed table six which shows Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants for Tokoroa and nationally for the 2018 calendar year, broken down by the type of accommodation.

Further data including the number of people receiving a benefit in Tokoroa is available from the Ministry's Benefit Fact Sheets available here: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/benefit/index.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.

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



Cassandra Wise

Manager, Issue Resolution, Service Delivery

Table one: The number of and dollar value of Special Needs Grant applications for food granted and declined for the years 2013 to 2018 in Tokoroa and nationally.

Calendar Year	Work and Income Service Centre	Applications			Total number of applications
		Granted applications granted	Dollar value of applications granted	Declined applications declined	
2013	Tokoroa	1,720	\$165,920.25	235	1,955
	National	345,509	\$35,627,646.39	19,704	365,213
2014	Tokoroa	1,807	\$181,909.26	185	1,992
	National	363,654	\$38,151,026.40	16,991	380,645
2015	Tokoroa	1,749	\$172,589.80	284	2,033
	National	368,764	\$39,338,259.75	15,361	384,125
2016	Tokoroa	1,585	\$158,079.39	238	1,823
	National	398,231	\$42,260,759.96	15,502	413,733
2017	Tokoroa	2,267	\$228,272.04	268	2,535
	National	495,738	\$52,039,037.21	18,743	514,481
2018	Tokoroa	1,762	\$162,370.43	285	2,047
	National	607,009	\$63,408,624.67	17,897	624,906

Notes:

- 'Tokoroa' is a Work and Income service centre in the Bay of Plenty Work and Income region.
- 'National' includes all Work and Income service centres, regions and processing centres.

Table two: Reasons for declining food grants in all of New Zealand and at the Tokoroa Service Centre in the 2018 calendar year

Reason for decline	Tokoroa	Nationally
Already received help for same/similar need in the past	6	2,635
Need can be met in another way	82	2,619
Circumstances could have been reasonably foreseen	29	2,488
Cash assets/Income exceed limit	14	1,788
Not a qualifying need	22	1,565
Not an emergency situation	10	889
Outstanding balance exceeds 6 week limit	22	759
Lack of Representation	9	553
Did not participate in budgeting	11	432
Not an essential need	7	431
Sufficient financial resource	8	174
Other	65	3,564
Total	285	17,897

Notes:

- 'Tokoroa' is a Work and Income service centre in the Bay of Plenty Work and Income region.
- 'National' includes all Work and Income service centres, regions and processing centres.

Table three: Number and dollar value of Special Needs Grant (SNG) applications for Emergency Housing (EH) for the 2016, 2017 and 2018 calendar years for the Tokoroa Service Centre and nationally, broken down by whether the application was approved or declined.

Calendar year	Work and Income Service Centre	Applications				Total number of applications
		Granted		Declined		
		Number of applications granted	Dollar value of applications granted	Number of applications declined		
2016 October to December	Tokoroa	S	\$8,240.00	S	S	S
	National	8,860	\$7,735,787.91	185	9,045	9,045
2017	Tokoroa	S	\$61,315.00	S	S	48
	National	35,995	\$36,976,173.11	1,021	37,016	37,016
2018	Tokoroa	S	\$17,625.00	S	S	25
	National	45,076	\$52,415,832.79	694	45,770	45,770

Table four: Number of clients who received a Special Needs Grant (SNG) for Emergency Housing (EH) in the 2016, 2017 and 2018 calendar years for the Tokoroa Service Centre and nationally.

Calendar year	Work and Income service centre	Number of clients	Number of grants	Amount paid
2016 October to December	Tokoroa	S	S	\$8,240.00
	National	2,616	8,860	\$7,735,787.91
2017	Tokoroa	15	S	\$61,315.00
	National	8,311	35,995	\$36,976,173.11
2018	Tokoroa	10	S	\$17,625.00
	National	9,828	45,076	\$52,415,832.79

Notes for tables three and four:

- 'Tokoroa' is a Work and Income service centre in the Bay of Plenty Work and Income region.
- 'National' includes all Work and Income service centres, regions and processing centres.
- Clients may receive multiple SNG's in any one period. Table three gives the total value of grants and total numbers of grants applied for during this period.
- Emergency Housing applications are only from October 2016 onwards. Therefore, calendar year 2016 includes only the months October, November and December.
- In certain circumstances, low numbers have the potential to lead to individuals being identifiable. Due to privacy concerns, numbers for some categories have been suppressed or aggregated. Secondary suppression rules have also been applied when necessary. Suppressed numbers have been replaced by an 'S'. This is in accordance with section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act.

Table five: Ethnicity of those declined for Food and Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants, nationally and in Tokoroa in the 2018 calendar year.

Ethnic Group	Food grant applications declined		Emergency Housing grant applications declined	
	Tokoroa	National	Tokoroa	National
Māori	130	7,051	S	288
NZ European	113	6,198	S	217
Pacific People	20	2,515	S	104
Other	15	1,423	S	57
Unspecified	7	710	S	28
Total	285	17,897	S	694

Notes:

- 'Tokoroa' is a Work and Income service centre in the Bay of Plenty Work and Income region.
- 'National' includes all Work and Income service centres, regions and processing centres.
- This is a count of applications for grants, not a count of clients. Clients may apply for and receive multiple grants in any one period.
- In certain circumstances, low numbers have the potential to lead to individuals being identifiable. Due to privacy concerns, numbers for some categories have been suppressed or aggregated. Secondary suppression rules have also been applied when necessary. Suppressed numbers have been replaced by an 'S'. This is in accordance with section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act.
- It cannot be assumed that the ethnicity classification used to construct this table necessarily aligns neatly with the current Statistics New Zealand classification of ethnicity. Ethnicity details recorded in MSD's systems have been gathered under a variety of classification schemes as clients came into contact with the Ministry.

Table six: Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants for Tokoroa and nationally for the 2018 calendar year, broken down by the type of accommodation.

Year	Type of accommodation	Number of grants	
		Tokoroa Work and Income Service Centre	Nationally
2018	Holiday park / Camp ground	S	1,321
	Hostel	0	2,161
	Marae	0	S
	Motel / Hotel	S	41,461
	Shelter	0	115
	Unknown	0	S
	Total	21	45,076

Notes:

- This is a count of grants. A client can have more than one grant in the time period.
- Site is based on the Work and Income site where the recommending case manager for the application was based at the time of the grant.
- In certain circumstances, low numbers have the potential to lead to individuals being identifiable. Due to privacy concerns, numbers for some categories have been suppressed or aggregated. Secondary suppression rules have also been applied when necessary. Suppressed numbers have been replaced by an 'S'. This is in accordance with section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act.