



[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

On 17 April 2019, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *the number of refugees put in emergency accommodation in Dunedin in 2015, 2016 2017, 2018 and 2019 up to April 17, broken down by the number of nights and the cost to HNZ.*

Upon arrival in New Zealand, quota refugees receive permanent residence and the usual two year stand-down period for accessing the welfare system is waived. Quota refugees spend their first six weeks in New Zealand at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre (MRRC) where they participate in a reception programme which aims to build basic social and coping skills required for refugees' new lives in New Zealand and provides information on work and expectations of employment. Prior to arrival in New Zealand, refugees are provided with information about working and living in New Zealand and an assessment is completed for each refugee to identify needs and services required once refugees arrive at MRRC.

Following completion of the reception programme refugees are sent to one of seven refugee settlement locations across New Zealand. They are Auckland, Hamilton/Waikato, Palmerston North/Manawatū, Greater Wellington, Nelson, Dunedin and Invercargill. These settlement locations are chosen based on a range of criteria including access to employment opportunities.

More information about the refugee quota programme and the refugee resettlement strategy is available at: [www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/what-we-do/our-strategies-and-projects/refugee-resettlement-strategy](http://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/what-we-do/our-strategies-and-projects/refugee-resettlement-strategy).

Refugees who apply for refugee status under any criteria other than as quota refugees are known as convention refugees. They can apply for refugee status before arriving

in New Zealand, upon arrival or after arrival. Once they are granted refugee status, they have to apply for a residence class visa to become entitled to reside indefinitely in New Zealand.

The Ministry is unable to electronically identify all clients who entered New Zealand as refugees, as this is not information that is entered as a marker on client files. In order to provide you with the information you have requested, Ministry staff would have to manually review hundreds of thousands of client files. As such your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

The Ministry has considered whether it would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. In either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

In order to address the intent of your request, the Ministry is able to provide information about clients who have an immigration date in the 5 years before their Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (SNG), who have a country of birth other than New Zealand, and who have received either a Special Needs Grant for 'Refugee Relocation Allowance', or have received an Emergency Benefit granted for reason 'Spontaneous Refugee' or 'Quota Refugee'.

Emergency Housing assistance payments are granted as Special Needs Grants. 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. This grant is paid to help meet the cost of short-term accommodation where no Transitional Housing is available. In most cases this grant does not need to be paid back. The Ministry acknowledges that motels are not a long-term housing solution, particularly for vulnerable people with complex needs, but they provide a short-term solution while more sustainable options are progressed.

More information about Emergency Housing SNGs is available here: [www.housing.msd.govt.nz/housing-options/emergency-housing.html](http://www.housing.msd.govt.nz/housing-options/emergency-housing.html).

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, information relating to the value of emergency housing prior to

December 2016 is refused under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

The Ministry has considered whether it would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. In either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced

Please see below a table showing the number of clients, estimated as refugees, who received Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (SNGs), the number of grants and the amount granted between 1 September 2016 and 31 March 2019.

<b>Quarter Ending</b>	<b>Number of Grants</b>	<b>Amount Granted</b>	<b>Number of Clients</b>
31-Dec-16	0	\$0	0
31-Mar-17	0	\$0	0
30-Jun-17	0	\$0	0
30-Sep-17	0	\$0	0
31-Dec-17	0	\$0	0
31-Mar-18	S	\$2,740	S
30-Jun-18	0	\$0	0
30-Sep-18	0	\$0	0
31-Dec-18	0	\$0	0
31-Mar-19	S	\$8,700	S

**Notes:**

- This data includes Emergency Housing SNGs paid under the "Emergency Housing" need code and those paid under "Other" with client events identified as Emergency Housing related. This is a count of grants. A client can have more than one grant in the time period.
- This is the amount granted. The total amount granted may not be the same as the amount spent.
- Dunedin is defined as grants granted through the Dunedin Central, South Dunedin and Mosgiel Work and Income sites. The 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 may potentially lead to individuals being identified. Due to these privacy concerns, numbers for some categories of clients have been suppressed or aggregated. Secondary suppression rules have also been applied when required. Suppressed numbers have been replaced by an 'S'. This information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act in order to protect the privacy of natural persons. 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 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, regarding Emergency Housing SNGs granted to refugees in Dunedin, 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**