



Tēnā koe

On 20 July 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *Can you please advise if we could please get another updated dataset of the Wage Subsidy data?*

On 21 July 2020, you were advised that the data set is provided as at a point in time, as the information is continually updated. At the time of your request the most recent data available was as at 2 July 2020. You confirmed you were happy to receive an updated version which you were advised would be available in late July.

As you are aware, the Wage Subsidy scheme has enabled rapid support for thousands of New Zealand businesses during this time of uncertainty and has ensured that employees are able to remain connected with their employers during the COVID-19 lockdown. The scheme has been set up on a high-trust model, in order to quickly deliver funds to support workers, families and businesses.

The Ministry has received a number of requests for the full list of recipients of the Wage Subsidy, including requests for the dataset that sits behind the online employer search tool. The need for more information about the Wage Subsidy recipients is recognised, however the Ministry has had to carefully balance transparency and privacy considerations when making a decision about publishing this information.

The Ministry developed the online COVID-19 Wage Subsidy Employer Search tool (search tool) with close involvement from the Privacy Commissioner to ensure compliance with the Privacy Act 1993. The group the Ministry was particularly concerned about, from a privacy perspective, were sole traders, as the publication of their information on a public register is also the publication of personal information and would reveal that they are personally receiving financial support. The Ministry is conscious that for some, there is stigma around receiving government support.

The information available behind the search tool includes only information about employers with three or more employees. Sole traders with two or less employees are excluded from the searchable database to further protect the privacy of individuals who had applied.

Please find attached the dataset which sits behind the search tool. This dataset includes the business name, the number of employees, and the total amount of

Wage Subsidy paid, including the amount paid for the Wage Subsidy Extension, as at 28 July 2020, for all employers with 3 or more employees.

Please note the following regarding the dataset provided:

- it does not include businesses that have repaid the subsidy in full
- it may not include accurate figures for businesses that have made repayments, as this information may take 2-3 working days to update
- the information is accurate as at the 28 July 2020, changes may have been made since this date, including that mentioned in the above point
- it does not include regional or industry sector breakdowns, and
- business names are the names given by employers on the Wage Subsidy application. Businesses may be known by, or operate under, different names.

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. 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 regarding the dataset which sits behind the online COVID-19 Wage Subsidy Employer Search tool, 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.

Nāku noa, nā



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Organisational Assurance and Communication