



11 AUG 2020

Dear

On 3 July 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *The total amount per year in transfer payments made to those aged 65+ (not including New Zealand Super and Veterans Pension)?*

On 10 July 2020, the Ministry contacted you to clarify your request. On the same day you refined your request to the following:

- *The amount in total that is paid per year by work and income to those aged 65+ for benefits other than NZ Super and the Veterans Pension?*

On 16 July 2020, the Ministry contacted you to clarify the time period you were after. On the same day you refined your response again to the following:

- *The amount in total that is paid per year by work and income to those aged 65+ for benefits other than NZ Super and the Veterans Pension from 2005 to 2020?*

In order to receive New Zealand Superannuation (NZS), a client must have reached the age of 65 and have been resident and present in New Zealand for not less than 10 years since the age of 20. This must include five years or more since the age of 50. However, a client may still qualify for NZS with less than 10 years of residence in New Zealand if they have migrated to New Zealand from a country with whom we have a reciprocal social security agreement.

NZS is one of the few international pension schemes that is given to everyone who meets the residency requirements. The Veterans Pension (VP) has the same residency and age requirements as NZS but is only available to New Zealand veterans who have recognised service. For further details regarding the eligibility criteria for New Zealand Superannuation, please see this link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/seniors/superannuation/superannuation-overview.html#null.

If a client does not meet the eligibility criteria for NZS or VP, he or she may still be entitled to a main benefit, including Jobseeker Support or Supported Living Payment. In addition, clients can apply for a range of supplementary assistance (e.g., Accommodation Supplement, Disability Allowance, Temporary Additional Support), which is designed to help low-income people to meet costs, such as those arising from housing, childcare, and heating – and from health conditions and disabilities. Almost all supplementary assistance is income tested, and some is also asset tested, to ensure it is targeted to people who require additional help.

The Ministry is unable to provide annual totals for the amount paid for main benefits other than NZS or VP to clients who are 65 years of age or older. The Ministry is only able to extract that data at a point in time and for a given week, as the number of clients receiving assistance can change week by week. Therefore, in order to provide the total amount paid per year, as per your request, Ministry staff would have to extract weekly data for every week of the preceding 15 years.

As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act, as it requires substantial collation. We have determined that 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 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 adversely affected by the substantial collation involved in meeting your request.

However, to meet the intent of your request, the Ministry can provide you with the number of clients 65 years of age or older who are receiving a benefit other than NZS or VP as at the last week of June, from 2005 to 2020. Please find this data in the table, below.

The number of clients 65 years of age or older receiving a benefit other than New Zealand Superannuation or the Veteran's Pension, and the amount payable, as at the last week of June, from 2005 to 2020

As at the last week of	Total rate payable to clients	Number of current clients
June 2005	\$1,146,070.38	7,155
June 2006	\$1,225,699.52	7,423
June 2007	\$1,259,553.39	7,468
June 2008	\$1,290,408.51	7,424
June 2009	\$1,376,322.04	7,700
June 2010	\$1,440,508.07	7,957
June 2011	\$1,480,930.92	7,962
June 2012	\$1,472,699.87	7,909
June 2013	\$1,448,022.05	7,859
June 2014	\$1,412,384.67	7,728
June 2015	\$1,412,837.46	7,860
June 2016	\$1,371,003.21	7,762
June 2017	\$1,304,762.03	7,442
June 2018	\$1,100,559.96	5,698
June 2019	\$1,072,224.35	5,514
June 2020	\$1,296,472.80	5,976

Table Notes:

- 'Total rate payable' is the total of the amount paid for the last week of June in the given year.
- Clients receiving the following benefits are included in this data: Domestic Purposes Benefit, Emergency Benefit, Emergency Maintenance Allowance, Invalids Benefit, Jobseeker Support, Sickness Benefit, Sickness Benefit Hardship, Sole Parent Support, Supported Living Payment, Unemployment Benefit (in Training), Unemployment Benefit, Unemployment Benefit Hardship, Unemployment Benefit Student Hardship, Widow's Benefit and/or Widow's Benefit Overseas.

Recent information about the number of NZS and VP recipients, including non-qualifying spouses, also receiving supplementary assistance is publicly available and can be found here: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/benefit/index.html.

Specifically, on that web page, please see the *New Zealand Superannuation and Veteran's Pension data table - June 2020*, which shows, for the last 5 years, the number of NZS and VP recipients who were also in receipt of the Accommodation Supplement, Disability Allowance, and/or Temporary Additional Support.

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. We 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 the annual total spent on clients 65 and over not receiving NZS or VP, 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



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