



03 DEC 2020

Tēnā koe (

On 21 October 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information regarding Hamilton for the years 2019 and 2020:

- *The number of motels (total number) and the number of rooms and persons where rent is either partly or wholly being paid by Work & Income or some other Government organization, and*
- *The cost per week being spent and the cost per annum.*

As you have requested information regarding motels, the Ministry has interpreted your request to be in relation to emergency housing.

On 19 November 2020, the Ministry advised you of the need to extend the time available to make a decision on your request until 3 December 2020.

The Ministry would generally only pay for motel accommodation through Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (EH SNG). EH SNGs are available to people who cannot remain in their usual place of residence, if any, and do not have access to other accommodation which is adequate for them or their family's needs. The Ministry pays EH SNGs directly to the accommodation supplier, and assistance is generally granted for up to seven nights but can be extended dependant on individual circumstances. Please note that EH SNG suppliers are not limited to motels and also include other types of accommodation such as hostels, hotels and holiday parks.

After these seven nights, Work and Income arrange another appointment with the client to discuss their housing situation and if another grant is required. The Ministry works hard to support people in emergency housing to secure a long-term housing solution, either through public housing or private rental accommodation. Other options including transitional housing can also be explored depending on availability and the individual's circumstances.

The Ministry recognises that emergency housing is not a long-term solution or the solution that we want to deliver for people who are potentially in a vulnerable situation. They provide short-term accommodation while more sustainable options are progressed. More information about EH SNGs is available here:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/emergency-housing.html.

There has been a growing demand nationally for emergency housing as the shortage of affordable housing and rising rents continues to impact low-income whānau, particularly those who are beneficiaries. The year 2020 has seen a significant increase in demand for emergency housing, as the Ministry supported people through the COVID-19 pandemic period with accommodation in which they could safely self-isolate. Due to the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, people also could not

easily move out of emergency housing into long-term accommodation during this period, contributing to longer durations of stay and higher costs.

The Ministry does not hold information on the total number of motels or rooms being used by a supplier to provide emergency housing. When a client requires emergency housing, the Ministry pays the supplier directly (on the client's behalf) and the supplier provides the client with a room. A supplier may have more than one motel, and the Ministry does not record each individual venue unless they are registered as individual suppliers by the owners. It is also unnecessary for the Ministry to collect information on how many rooms a client/household is staying in, as it is not required to pay the grant. Therefore, the Ministry is unable to quantify how many motels or rooms are being used for emergency accommodation, and I am refusing your request for this information under section 18(g) of the Act as the information you have requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation.

I am also unable to provide you with the cost per week for EH SNGs as the Ministry would need to divert personnel from their core duties and allocate extra time to provide this information. The diversion of these resources would impair the Ministry's ability to continue standard operations and would be an inefficient use of the Ministry's resources. As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act, requires substantial collation. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

However, the Ministry is able to provide you with the number of EH SNGs granted, clients receiving EH SNGs, emergency housing suppliers and granted amount of EH SNGs in Hamilton City. Please note that these grants are not necessarily limited to suppliers that provide motel accommodation.

Please see the following two tables below:

- **Table One:** Number of EH SNGs granted, clients receiving EH SNGs, emergency housing suppliers, granted amount of EH SNGs and nights granted in Hamilton City TLA by quarter ending 1 October 2018 to 30 September 2020
- **Table Two:** Number of EH SNGs granted, clients receiving EH SNGs, and granted amount of EH SNGs in Hamilton City TLA quarter ending 1 April 2020 to 30 September, broken down by household composition

Table One: Number of EH SNGs granted, clients receiving EH SNGs, emergency housing suppliers and granted amount of EH SNGs in Hamilton City TLA from 1 October 2018 to 30 September 2020

| Quarter ending | Grants | Clients | Suppliers | Granted amount | Nights granted |
|----------------|--------|---------|-----------|----------------|----------------|
| December 2018 | 1,851 | 332 | 54 | \$2,945,971.50 | 12,369 |
| March 2019 | 2,036 | 379 | 58 | \$3,581,989.85 | 13,610 |
| June 2019 | 2,647 | 473 | 62 | \$4,940,325.21 | 17,781 |
| September 2019 | 3,205 | 567 | 59 | \$6,078,923.05 | 21,699 |
| December 2019 | 3,270 | 499 | 61 | \$6,603,580.05 | 22,233 |
| March 2020 | 3,633 | 584 | 65 | \$7,775,135.73 | 25,127 |
| June 2020 | 3,599 | 829 | 109 | \$9,614,010.62 | 35,990 |
| September 2020 | 2,968 | 740 | 87 | \$9,067,510.64 | 33,390 |

Table Two: Number of EH SNGs granted, clients receiving EH SNGs, and granted amount of EH SNGs in Hamilton City TLA from 1 April 2020 to 30 September, broken down by household composition

| Quarter ending | Household composition | Grants | Clients | Granted amount |
|----------------|--------------------------|--------|--------------|----------------|
| June 2020 | 1 adult no children | 1,198 | 364 | \$1,621,876.00 |
| | 1 adult with child(ren) | 1,902 | 361 | \$6,069,838.16 |
| | 2 adults no children | 122 | 30 | \$265,733.50 |
| | 2 adults with child(ren) | 372 | 69 | \$1,647,506.96 |
| | Unknown | 5 | 5 | \$9,056.00 |
| | Quarter Total | | 3,599 | 829 |
| September 2020 | 1 adult no children | 802 | 246 | \$1,309,643.79 |
| | 1 adult with child(ren) | 1,739 | 396 | \$5,971,786.90 |
| | 2 adults no children | 119 | 29 | \$369,078.95 |
| | 2 adults with child(ren) | 308 | 69 | \$1,417,001.00 |
| | Quarter Total | | 2,968 | 740 |

Notes for **Table One** and **Table Two**:

- A client can have more than one grant in the time period.
- The total amount granted may not be the same as the amount spent.
- Clients can be counted in multiple quarters if they have grants in more than one quarter.
- TLA is Territorial Local Authority. It is defined under the Local Government Act 2002 as a city council or district council.
- TLA is estimated based on the clients address at the time of the grant. It may not be the same as the address of the emergency housing provider.
- Ungeocoded address records that are unable to be matched to a TLA through suburb and city details have an unknown TLA.
- The number of nights granted is not necessarily the number of nights the client stayed in emergency housing.
- Household composition of EH SNG applicants was not captured prior to 1 April 2020.
- Household composition is based on the declared adults and children staying in emergency housing and may not be reflective of their actual family size.

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 on the Ministry'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 regarding motels being used for emergency housing 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.

Ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Karen Hocking', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Karen Hocking
**General Manager
Housing**