



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

Dear

On 11 June 2020, you made a media enquiry with the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting the following information in relation to the COVID-19 Wage Subsidy search tool (the search tool):

- *What is the type of database used to manage the data that is displayed on the wage subsidy search tool?*
- *How is the data organized within the database? Multiple tables/collection, one single table/collection?*
- *What are the variables (and data types of those variables) stored for each business that received the subsidy?*

On 23 June 2020, it was determined that your enquiry should be treated under the Official Information Act 1982, as an information request, and your enquiry was subsequently transferred to the Ministry's Official Information team for response.

The information behind the search tool contains a narrow subset of the full Wage Subsidy database information. The search tool dataset contains the following information about the applicants: business name, number of employees claimed for and total amount paid. The information behind the search tool does not have the details about businesses with less than three employees or sole traders.

The search tool currently contains complex rules to summarise information into a consolidated view for the purposes of display in the search tool. This is to ensure that the Ministry does not misrepresent what businesses have received; as businesses may have applied multiple times for different employees, have made refunds or made incorrect applications that were manually adjusted.

The rationale for creating the search tool was so that employees could check to see if their employer had applied to receive the Wage Subsidy payments and then use this information to follow up with their employer, or the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, if they had a complaint about not receiving Wage Subsidy payments from the employer. In addition, it also allows members of the public to search for employers who they suspect of receiving the subsidy who shouldn't have, enabling them to make a complaint if they wanted to.

The search tool was designed in a way that only returns five results at a time, as this achieved the objectives of ensuring employer accountability, public scrutiny and transparency of how we are spending public money, and at the same time protecting privacy.

In regard to question one of your request, a relational database management system is used to manage the data displayed on the search tool.

In regard to question two, the search tools' database consists of a single table, which collates information from the main Wage Subsidy database, which was used to receive and process applications. The main Wage Subsidy database, which the search tools' single table draws on, is made up of multiple tables.

In regard to question three, the following table shows the variables stored on the search tools' database for each business that received the subsidy.

**Table one: Information variables stored in the COVID-19 Wage Subsidy Employer search tool database**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Description</b>
EXTRACT_DATE	Date last updated.
LAST_PAYMENT_RUN	Last Payment run
VISIBILITY_RULE	Determines whether employer record should be uploaded to the tool. i.e.
IRD_NUMBER	Employer IR Number
APPLICANT_ID	Application ID
PAYMENT_COUNT	How many payments have been made
EMPLOYER_NAME	Employer name
EMPLOYEES_PAID_TOTAL	Total number of employees paid.
AMOUNT_PAID_TOTAL_IN_CENTS.	Total amount paid to employer

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 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, 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

  
Rupert Ablett-Hampson  
**Acting Deputy Chief Executive, Organisational Assurance and Communication**