



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

28 MAY 2020

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

On 4 May 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

1. According to MSD data, there were 309,995 New Zealanders on a main benefit in the week ending 27 March. How many of these people identified as being Maori?
2. According to MSD data, there were 341,728 New Zealanders on a main benefit in the week ending 24 April, an increase of 31,733 from the week ending 27 March. How many of the additional 31,733 people identified as being Maori?
3. According to MSD data, there were 151,745 New Zealanders on a job seeker benefit in the week ending 27 March. How many of these people identified as being Maori?
4. According to MSD data, there were 180,383 New Zealanders on a job seeker benefit in the week ending 24 April, an increase of 28,638 from the week ending 27 March. How many of the additional 28,638 people identified as being Maori?
5. Does MSD hold information about where successful applicants of both a main benefit and a job seekers benefit were last employed?
6. If so, can I please be provided with a breakdown of where the additional 31,733 people (who received a main benefit between the week ending 27 March and 24 April) were last employed? (can be provided by sector i.e. hospitality, retail etc.)
7. Can I also be provided with a breakdown of where the additional 28,638 people (who received a job seeker benefit between the week ending 27 March and 24 April) were last employed?

Jobseeker Support is a temporary benefit paid for up to 52 weeks while clients look for work, are in training for work or are unable to work due to a health condition, injury or disability. More information about Jobseeker Support can be found here: <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/jobseeker-support/index.html>

A range of assistance is available to support clients in receipt of a main benefit into employment if they are ready and able to do so. Further information is available at the following link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/work/index.html.

For the sake of clarity your questions are addressed in turn:

1. *According to MSD data, there were 309,995 New Zealanders on a main benefit in the week ending 27 March. How many of these people identified as being Maori?*
2. *According to MSD data, there were 341,728 New Zealanders on a main benefit in the week ending 24 April, an increase of 31,733 from the week ending 27 March. How many of the additional 31,733 people identified as being Maori?*
3. *According to MSD data, there were 151,745 New Zealanders on a job seeker benefit in the week ending 27 March. How many of these people identified as being Maori?*
4. *According to MSD data, there were 180,383 New Zealanders on a job seeker benefit in the week ending 24 April, an increase of 28,638 from the week ending 27 March. How many of the additional 28,638 people identified as being Maori?*

Please find enclosed two tables which provide the following information:

- **Table One: The number of working age clients in receipt of a main benefit broken down by Māori, other and unspecified ethnicities as at the weeks ending 27 March 2020 and 24 April 2020.**
- **Table Two: The number of working age clients in receipt of Jobseeker Support broken down by Māori, other and unspecified ethnicities as at the weeks ending 27 March 2020 and 24 April 2020.**

It is important to note that as a result of COVID-19 the Ministry is reporting data on main benefits on a weekly basis. However, standard reporting completed and published quarterly. The Ministry publishes main benefit data quarterly on the Benefit Fact Sheets at the following link: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/benefit/index.html.

Please note that the data in **Table One** and **Table Two** is extracted at a point in time and does not match the figures in the March 2020 Benefit Fact Sheet.

Please note, the ethnicity classification that is used to construct this table does not necessarily align with the current Statistics New Zealand classification of ethnicity. Ethnicity details recorded by the Ministry have been gathered under various classification methods as clients come into contact with the Ministry. The ethnicity data is self-identified based on an individual's preference or self-construct.

In situations where a client identifies as multiple ethnicities, we only report one ethnicity for core benefit data (one ethnic group per person with Māori coming first, Pacific groups second followed by other groups ending with NZ European). You are provided with Māori and unspecified because a person who identifies as Māori may be counted in one of those two categories. The other category includes people from all other ethnicities.

5. *Does MSD hold information about where successful applicants of both a main benefit and a job seekers benefit were last employed?*
6. *If so, can I please be provided with a breakdown of where the additional 31,733 people (who received a main benefit between the week ending 27 March and 24 April) were last employed? (can be provided by sector i.e. hospitality, retail etc.)*

7. *Can I also be provided with a breakdown of where the additional 28,638 people (who received a job seeker benefit between the week ending 27 March and 24 April) were last employed?*

The Ministry is unable to provide information about where successful applicants were last employed as this information is not required in order to assess eligibility for a main benefit. On some occasions this information may be disclosed by a client to a work broker to assist in looking for suitable employment. However, as the Ministry is unable to provide this information for every client, I am refusing your request under section 18(g) of the Official Information Act. 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.

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.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding benefit statistics, 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 iti noa, nā

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Bridget Saunders
Manager, Issue Resolution, Service Delivery

Table One: The number of working age clients in receipt of a main benefit broken down by Māori, other and unspecified ethnicities as at the weeks ending 27 March 2020 and 24 April 2020

Week ending	Ethnicity			Total
	Māori	Other	Unspecified	
24 April 2020	122,809	203,141	15,777	341,727
27 March 2020	114,147	183,073	12,775	309,995
Difference	8,662	20,068	3,002	31,732

Table Two: The number of working age clients in receipt of Jobseeker Support broken down by Māori, other and unspecified ethnicities as at the weeks ending 27 March 2020 and 24 April 2020

Week ending	Ethnicity						Total
	Māori		Other		Unspecified		
	Jobseeker HC&D	Jobseeker Work Ready	Jobseeker HC&D	Jobseeker Work Ready	Jobseeker HC&D	Jobseeker Work Ready	
24 April 2020	19,796	47,275	42,354	62,056	2,338	6,567	180,386
27 March 2020	19,395	40,022	41,260	44,854	2,258	3,956	151,745
Difference	401	7,253	1,094	17,202	80	2,611	28,641

Notes on Tables One and Two:

- Jobseeker HC&D is Jobseeker Health Condition, Injury or Disability
- Jobseeker Work Ready related includes Jobseeker Support Work Ready and Jobseeker Support Work Ready Hardship.
- Jobseeker Health Condition, Injury or Disability includes Jobseeker Support Health Condition, Injury or Disability and Jobseeker Support Health Condition, Injury or Disability Hardship.
- Main benefits exclude NZ Superannuation, Veteran's Pension, Non-Beneficiary assistance, Orphan's Benefit and Unsupported Child's Benefit
- The information in Table One and Table Two are extracted at a point in time and does not match the figures in the March 2020 Benefit Fact Sheet.
- Please note the ethnicity classification that is used to construct this table does not necessarily align with the current Statistics New Zealand classification of ethnicity. Ethnicity details recorded by the Ministry have been gathered under a varied of classification methods as clients come into contact with the Ministry. The ethnicity data is self-identified based on an individual's preference or self-construct.