



04 NOV 2020

On 30 September 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *Can you please provide number of Accommodation Supplement (AS) recipients in the Hamilton region broken down into: homeowner, non-homeowner, beneficiaries vs. non-beneficiaries (excluding AS), average income and average value of AS payments.*

On 6 October 2020, you clarified parts of your request to the following:

- *Is it possible to break down the number of AS recipients by those that receive another form of MSD benefit (e.g. jobseeker/supported living etc) vs. non beneficiaries, (e.g. main source of income is paid employment)?*
- *I am looking to demonstrate that AS is available to more than low income households. Is it possible to show average household income, for those that receive AS, where their primary source of income is from employment?*

The Accommodation Supplement (AS) is a non-taxable benefit which provides financial assistance towards accommodation costs. It is available for people who rent, board or own their own home. A person does not have to be receiving a benefit to be assessed to qualify for AS. It is calculated using a formula that considers geographical location, family size, accommodation costs, income, and accommodation type.

The formula for calculating AS can be found here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/accommodation-supplement/calculating-rate-general-formula-01.html.

Furthermore, you can find the AS maximum rates here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/deskfile/extra-help-information/temporary-additional-support-tables/accommodation-supplement-maximum-rates-current.html.

As per your request, please find two tables, attached as **Appendix A**, providing a detailed breakdown of AS recipients in the Hamilton region, broken down by tenure type, benefit or non-benefit, average income and average AS rate:

- **Table One:** The total number of current clients receiving the AS in Hamilton Territorial Local Authority by tenure type, benefit or non-benefit and average weekly AS rate as at end of September 2020
- **Table Two:** The total number of current clients receiving the AS in Hamilton Territorial Local Authority by tenure type, benefit or non-benefit and average weekly income as at end of September 2020

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
- 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. 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 Accommodation Supplement recipients in the Hamilton region, 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



Bridget Saunders
**Manager, Issue Resolution
Service Delivery**

Appendix A

Table One: The total number of current clients receiving the Accommodation Supplement in Hamilton Territorial Local Authority by tenure type, benefit or non-benefit and average weekly rate as at end of September 2020

Benefit group	Tenure type					
	Renting		Own Home		Boarding	
	Number of clients	Average weekly rate	Number of clients	Average weekly rate	Number of clients	Average weekly rate
Benefits	9,132	\$115.22	691	\$103.77	3,653	\$41.80
Non-benefits	2,395	\$115.69	467	\$113.42	171	\$40.57
Total	11,527	\$115.31	1,158	\$107.66	3,824	\$41.75

Table Two: The total number of current clients receiving the Accommodation Supplement in Hamilton Territorial Local Authority by tenure type, benefit or non-benefit and average weekly income as at end of September 2020

Benefit group	Tenure type					
	Renting		Own Home		Boarding	
	Number of clients	Average weekly income	Number of clients	Average weekly income	Number of clients	Average weekly income
Benefits	9,132	\$205.74	691	\$260.90	3,653	\$185.18
Non-benefits	2,395	\$709.67	467	\$814.46	171	\$444.58
Total	11,527	\$545.83	1,158	\$669.68	3,824	\$260.37

Notes:

- AS is not paid for clients (main signatory and their partner) in Housing NZ accommodation or any other Community Housing Provider property where the provider is receiving Income Related Rent (IRR).
- 'Benefits' refers to all benefits including New Zealand Superannuation (NZS) and Veteran's Pension.
- 'Non-benefits' refers to clients who are not receiving a benefit but are receiving AS.
- Not all clients have income recorded. These are recorded as zero.
- Income may include money received from earnings from employment, interest from deposits, dividends, Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) payments etc.