



08 SEP 2020

Tēnā koe

On 11 August 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *How many people have been denied the covid relief payment because they are employed (even when this employment is zero hours contract or casual, and very part time (only a few hours a week))?*
- *Is there any way to break the above by region, gender, ethnicity, city vs province/rural areas?*

The COVID-19 Income Relief Payment (CIRP) was launched on 8 June 2020 to provide temporary financial support to clients who have lost employment due to the impacts of COVID-19. CIRP is paid instead of a main benefit and can be paid for a maximum of 12 weeks. CIRP cannot be paid to any person employed at the time of their application, regardless of the type of employment or if it is full time, part time or casual.

Entitlement to CIRP is based on an individual's circumstances, as well as eligibility criteria which must be met. More information about the criteria for eligibility and persons who would not qualify for CIRP can be found here:

- www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/covid-19-income-relief-payment/qualifications.html
- www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/covid-19-income-relief-payment/clients-who-will-not-qualify.html

To provide accurate data on CIRP applications that were declined for a specific reason, including because the person was employed, the Ministry would need to review thousands of individual client files. Therefore, this aspect of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act as providing the information would require substantial manual collation. 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 prejudiced.

Instead, please find three tables overleaf which outline the total number of CIRP application declines by MSD region, gender and ethnicity.

Table One: The total number of CIRP application declines from 8 June 2020 to 28 August 2020, by MSD Region

| MSD Region | Declines |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Auckland Metro | 1,688 |
| Bay of Plenty | 277 |
| Canterbury | 476 |
| Central | 157 |
| East Coast | 140 |
| Nelson | 171 |
| Northland | 143 |
| Southern | 229 |
| Taranaki | 103 |
| Waikato | 209 |
| Wellington | 238 |
| Other | 1,592 |
| Total | 5,423 |

Table Two: The total number of CIRP application declines from 8 June 2020 to 28 August 2020, by gender

| Gender | Declines |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Male | 2,873 |
| Female | 2,540 |
| Gender Diverse | 10 |
| Total | 5,423 |

Table Three: The total number of CIRP application declines from 8 June 2020 to 28 August 2020, by ethnicity

| Ethnicity | Declines |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Māori | 1,395 |
| NZ European | 1,860 |
| Other | 1,154 |
| Pacific Peoples | 439 |
| Unspecified | 575 |
| Total | 5,423 |

Notes:

- CIRP is the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment.
- CIRP was first granted from 8 June 2020.
- This is a count of declines, not Clients.
- This includes declines for any reason.
- Ethnicity data is self-identified and multiple ethnicities may be chosen by an individual as fits their preference or self-concept.

- Please note that 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 variety of classification methods as clients come into contact with the Ministry. The ethnicity data may be self-identified based on an individual's preference or self-construct. While the Ministry collects multiple ethnicities from clients, we only report a unique form of 'identified' 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).
- Other region refers to people managed by national units, for example, contact centres and processing centres.

Please note, the high number of clients presenting in the Auckland region are due to the areas high population share in regard to benefit/CIRP.

The high 'other' figures are due to a large volume of clients coming through the Ministry's Central Processing Unit. Clients are now opting to engage with Ministry services over the phone and via the internet as opposed to going into a Service Centre.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

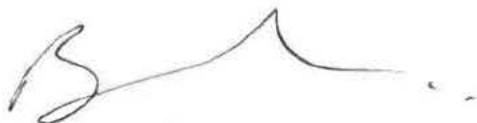
- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

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 the applications that have been declined the CIRP, 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



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