



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

13 APR 2021

Dear

On 22 March 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *Any cost benefit analysis you have done on increasing Accommodation Supplement to reduce or eliminate the need for emergency housing.*

The Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (EH SNG) is available to people who cannot remain in their usual place or residence, if any, and do not have access to other accommodation which is adequate for them or their family's need. Assistance is generally granted for up to seven nights but can be extended, dependent on individual circumstances.

After these seven nights, Work and Income will arrange another appointment with the client to discuss their housing situation, and to determine if another grant is required. The Ministry works hard to support people receiving EH SNGs to secure a long-term housing solution, either through public housing or private rental accommodation.

Some people may struggle to access suitable housing due to a lack of available supply or they simply may not be able to meet the high cost of housing which may result in them receiving EH SNG support for an extended period of time.

The Ministry recognises that emergency housing is not a long-term solution, however, is a short-term solution for people who are potentially in a vulnerable situation. More information about EH SNGs is available on the Ministry's website at the following link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/index.html.

The Ministry understands that the demand for housing across New Zealand is growing, and more people are experiencing a severe and immediate need. This demand is generated by a shortage of affordable housing, rising house prices, and rent growth. People on low incomes are most affected by rising housing costs, and many seek financial help from the Ministry.

At this time, the Ministry has not undertaken a cost benefit analysis on increasing the Accommodation Supplement to reduce Emergency Housing reliance. As such the Ministry is refusing your request under section 18(e) of the Act as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

You might be interested to read about the recent changes to increase main benefit rates from 1 April 2021. This information can be found at the following link:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/news/2021/benefit-and-payment-rates-2021.html.

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 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 in regard to any cost benefit analysis the Ministry has done on increasing the Accommodation Supplement, 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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alex McKenzie', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Alex McKenzie
Policy Manager
Employment and Housing Policy