



Tēnā koe

On 2 August 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *access to the bulk data of wage subsidy information available in the Ministry of Social Development website*

On 5 August 2021, you clarified your request to the Ministry with the following information:

- *the bulk data behind the COVID-19 wage subsidies <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2020/covid-19/covid-19-wage-subsidy-employer-search.html>*

The Wage Subsidy Scheme has enabled rapid support for thousands of New Zealand businesses during this time of uncertainty and has ensured that employees are able to remain connected with their employers during the COVID-19 lockdown. The scheme has been set up on a high-trust model in order to quickly deliver funds to support workers, families and businesses.

The Ministry developed the online search tool with close involvement from the Privacy Commissioner to ensure compliance with the Privacy Act 1993. To protect the privacy of employees and employers of small businesses, the Ministry has omitted employers with fewer than three employees from the search tool. Publishing this information on a public register would make the personal information of sole traders and other small businesses public. The aim of the search tool is not to identify individual persons who received the wage subsidy, and the protection of privacy for natural persons outweighed the public interest for this information.

Please see enclosed, the dataset which sits behind the search tool. This dataset includes the business name, the number of employees, and total amount of Wage Subsidy paid, as at 12 August 2021, for all employers with 3 or more employees.

Please note the following details regarding the dataset provided:

- Due to the date of the information provided, the dataset does not include information from the COVID-19 Wage Subsidy August 2021.
- The dataset does not include businesses that have repaid the subsidy in full.
- The dataset may not include accurate figures for businesses that have made repayments, as this information may take 2-3 working days to update.
- The information is accurate as at the 12 August 2021. Changes may have been made since this date, including the aforementioned points.

- The dataset does not include regional or industry sector breakdowns.
- Business names are the names given by employers on the Wage Subsidy application. Businesses may be known by, or operate under, different names.

The principles and purposes of the Act 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 and attachments 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, 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



Melissa Gill

**Deputy Chief Executive
Organisational Assurance and Communication**