



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

16 FEB 2021

On 18 January 2021, you emailed the office of Hon Carmel Sepuloni requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *Request to know if people seeking accommodation in the far north are being accommodated in Paihia. I understand if this is correct it is a luxury hotel with sea views. When was this decision made, who made it and how long if correct will this go on for?*

On the 18 January 2021, your request was transferred in full to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) to answer your request.

Accommodation supplier's offer a service to the Ministry and would be considered to be an appropriate Emergency accommodation if they are a commercial or a not-for-profit accommodation provider, are approved by the relevant authority to provide accommodation services, and meet the requirements to become a Work and Income supplier.

A client can receive an Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (EH SNG) for the actual and reasonable costs for adequate emergency housing that meets their needs. An EH SNG is considered last resort funding. The adequacy of the accommodation for the client and their immediate family's needs must be balanced with paying for the least expensive option. More information about actual and reasonable emergency housing costs that can be covered by the Ministry can be found at the following link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/actual-and-reasonable-emergency-housing-costs-that-can-be-covered.html .

As a guideline, Ministry staff will follow the maximum per night rates for emergency housing. There are some circumstances that the Ministry will pay more than the maximum amount available. More information on EH SNG is available on the Work and Income website at the following link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/maximum-per-night-rates-for-special-needs-grant-for-emergency-housing.html.

When assessing a client's eligibility to receive an EH SNG, the Ministry works with them to find a suitable place to stay in the area they prefer. Generally, this would be in the same area that the client had been living previously but may be elsewhere depending on the client's individual needs and circumstances. The region has advised us that there are clients receiving an EH SNG in the Far North TLA. The Ministry can confirm that currently there are no clients receiving EH SNG that are located in the township of Paihia.

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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 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 in regards to the emergency housing in Paihia, 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



 Karen Hocking
General Manager
Housing