



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

28 JAN 2021

On 9 December 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- 1. How many children are currently in the care of people in emergency housing placements in the Bay of Plenty? This further broken down into specific numbers for Rotorua and Tauranga/Western Bay.*
- 2. How many children are currently in the care of people in motel/emergency in the Bay of Plenty? This further broken down into specific numbers for Rotorua and Tauranga/Western Bay.*
- 3. How many children are currently in the care of people in transitional housing in the Bay of Plenty? This further broken down into specific numbers for Rotorua and Tauranga/Western Bay.*

On 11 December 2020, you were informed by HUD that questions one and two of your request had been transferred to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) for response.

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 needs. The Ministry pays EH SNGs directly to the accommodation supplier and assistance is generally granted for up to seven nights but can be extended depending on the individual's circumstances.

After these seven nights, Work and Income arrange another appointment with the client to discuss their housing situation and if another grant is required. The Ministry works hard to support people in emergency housing to secure a long-term housing solution, either through public housing or private rental accommodation. Other options including transitional housing can also be explored as an option depending on availability and the individual's circumstances.

The Ministry recognises that motels are not a long-term solution or the solution that we want to deliver for people who are potentially in a vulnerable situation. They provide a short-term solution while more sustainable options are progressed. More information about EH SNGs is available at the following link:

[www.workandincome.govt.nz/%20map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/emergency-housing.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/%20map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/emergency-housing.html).

There has been a growing demand nationally for emergency housing as the shortage of affordable housing and rising rents continues to impact low-income whānau, particularly those who are beneficiaries. The year 2020 has seen a significant increase in demand for emergency housing, as the Ministry supported people through the COVID-19 pandemic period with accommodation where they could safely self-isolate. Due to the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, people also could not easily move out of emergency housing into long-term accommodation which contributed to longer durations of stay and higher costs.

The Ministry records information about the household composition of clients in Emergency Housing (i.e. whether the client is living with a partner and children.); not the number of distinct children that have been placed in Emergency Housing. Therefore, I am refusing questions one and two of your request for information about the number of children placed in Emergency Housing under section 18(g) of the Act, as this information is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation.

The Ministry does hold information about the household composition of EH SNG recipients; this has been recorded since 1 April 2020. Please note that this data does not record distinct children and therefore is not representative of the number of children housed in EH over the relevant period. However, to be helpful, this information is provided to you and can be found in the following two tables attached in **Appendix A**:

- **Table One** shows the number of EH SNG grants, clients and the amount granted for Rotorua, Tauranga and Western Bay of Plenty for the quarters ending June 2020 and September 2020.
- **Table Two** shows the number of distinct clients for EH SNGs for Rotorua, Tauranga and Western Bay of Plenty for the quarters ending June 2020 and September 2020, broken down by household composition of recipients.

It is important to note that some numbers in table two have been suppressed and are represented by an 'S', in order to protect client privacy. The Ministry is unable to provide you with the exact number as releasing this information is likely to risk identifying the individuals concerned. As such, this information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act. The need to protect the privacy of these individual outweighs any public interest in the information.

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 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](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding children in care of people in Emergency Housing placements in the Bay of Plenty, 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'K. Hocking', with a large loop at the end of the signature.

Karen Hocking  
**General Manager**  
**Housing**

**Appendix A:**

**Table One:** The number of EH SNG grants, clients, and the amount granted for Rotorua, Tauranga and Western Bay of Plenty for the quarters ending June 2020 and September 2020.

Territorial Local Authorities	June 2020			September 2020		
	Grants	Clients	Amount	Grants	Clients	Amount
Rotorua District	2,088	564	\$5,058,176.82	3,115	607	\$4,674,560.88
Tauranga City	1,054	327	\$2,775,772.69	1,469	328	\$2,561,352.97
Western Bay of Plenty District	133	49	\$255,309.50	204	53	\$305,389.85

**Notes:**

- This table contains counts of grants and clients.
- One client may have more than one Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant.
- Territorial Local Authority (TLA) is estimated based on the clients address at the time of the grant. It may not be the same as the address of the emergency housing supplier.
- Distinct clients can be counted in more than one quarter if they have had grants in multiple quarters.
- Distinct clients should not be summed up across TLAs as they may be represented in multiple TLAs if regularly changing their address.
- The amount granted may not be the amount spent.

**Table Two:** The number of distinct clients for EH SNGs for Rotorua, Tauranga and Western Bay of Plenty for the quarters ending June 2020 and September 2020, broken down by household composition of recipients.

Quarter ending	Household composition broken down by TLA	1 adult no children	1 adult with one or more children	2 adults no children	2 adults with one or more children	Unknown	Total
<b>June 2020</b>	Rotorua District	310	194	S	33	S	<b>564</b>
	Tauranga City	168	114	S	25	S	<b>327</b>
	Western Bay of Plenty District	26	17	S	S	S	<b>49</b>
<b>September 2020</b>	Rotorua District	341	210	20	36	0	<b>607</b>
	Tauranga City	157	121	S	27	S	<b>328</b>
	Western Bay of Plenty District	23	20	S	S	0	<b>53</b>

**Notes:**

- The two quarters cannot be added together as some clients may appear in both quarters.
- Household composition is based on the number of people staying in the motel - and may not be reflective of the actual family size.
- Household composition is based on the last EH-SNG granted to the client within the TLA for each quarter.
- Household composition can only be reported from April 2020.
- In certain circumstances low numbers may potentially lead to individuals being identified.
- Due to these privacy concerns, numbers for some categories of clients have been suppressed or aggregated.
- Secondary suppression rules have also been applied when required. Suppressed numbers have been replaced by an 'S'.