



03 JUN 2021

Tēnā koe

On 6 May 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *I would like to please request figures for the number of emergency accommodation providers in Nelson?*
- *Could I please also get figures for the number of people on the waiting list?*

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 driving up house prices and rents. People on low incomes are most affected by rising housing costs and many seek financial help through the Ministry.

The Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (EH SNG) is available to people who cannot remain in their usual place of 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.

Across government, there is a major programme of work underway aimed at increasing the supply of public housing and improving housing affordability and supply.

Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga (The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development/HUD) and Kāinga Ora are responsible for increasing the supply of affordable and public housing. This includes planning, and with Kāinga Ora, delivering more public housing, transitional housing, and services to tackle homelessness. HUD is also working to improve housing affordability and supply for aspiring homeowners.

In regard to the first aspect of your request, please find **Table One** enclosed at the end of this response as **Appendix A**, showing a list of suppliers that have received at least one Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants payment between 01 January 2021 - 31 March 2021 for grants granted to recipients in the Nelson City Territorial Local Authority (TLA).

Please note, the lowest geographical boundary the Ministry reports on for clients receiving EH SNGs is TLA. The TLA is estimated based on the clients' address at the time of the grant. This TLA may not be the same as the address of the emergency housing supplier. Where the client address is not recorded, the location of the Ministry's service centre case managing the client has been used to approximate which TLA a

client resides in. However, as the Ministry has switched to working from national queues, EH SNGs and other hardship grants could be granted by a case manager working anywhere in New Zealand. Therefore, in such cases, the TLA may not reflect the actual client address or location. Due to the transient nature of people receiving EH SNGs, the recorded address for a client may also be that of a trusted family member or friend who receives mail on their behalf.

You will notice that the lists of registered emergency housing suppliers provided include suppliers from outside of the Nelson City TLA. This is likely to be for payments made in arrears for a previous period of accommodation, or payments for a future period. A number of clients may have recently moved, but their address details have not yet been updated.

Please note that the registered supplier name is the name of the parent company of the accommodation supplier, and not necessarily the name of the accommodation itself. One registered supplier may provide accommodation across multiple premises in different locations or trading names, receiving payment through the single supplier record.

In regard to the second aspect of your request, the Ministry publishes a large amount of data on the Public Housing Register (the Register), including a regional breakdown by TLA. The latest publicly available data shows that as at the end of the quarter ending 31 December 2021, there were 253 applicants on the Register in the Nelson City TLA. You can find the latest number of people on the Register for the Nelson City TLA on the Ministry's website here: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/housing/index.html#TheHousingRegistersincenbspDecember20182.

As such, this aspect of your request is refused under section 18(d) of the Act, on the basis that the requested information is already publicly available.

Please note, the Register is dynamic rather than static, and it changes as people's circumstances and situations change. Placing people and families into houses is about matching them with the right house in the area they want to live. This includes ensuring the family has the right number of bedrooms, is close to essential services such as schools, and that the accommodation meets any disability needs if appropriate. Those assessed as having the greater need for housing will be prioritised higher. As people's needs change, their priority on the Register may change also. As such, the length of time spent on the Register awaiting housing can vary significantly.

Each housing application is given a priority rating based on the Ministry's assessment of housing need, and all applications are measured against the same criteria to determine that priority rating. Applicants who are assessed as at risk (Priority A) or as having a serious housing need (Priority B) are placed on the Register until a house becomes available. The Ministry's role is to assess people's need for public housing and if they or a family member need an accessible home, we capture that as part of the assessment process. Clients who are on the Register will be contacted on a regular basis to confirm their circumstances and are referred to public housing providers when suitable properties become available.

Further information regarding the assessment of a client's housing need, housing need priority ratings and the calculation of overall priority ratings can be found on the Work

and Income website here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/assessment-of-housing-need-01.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 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, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response to your request regarding the Public Housing Register and Emergency Housing in Nelson, 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**

Appendix A

Table One: List of suppliers that have received at least one Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants payment between 01 January 2021 to 31 March 2021 for grants granted to recipients in the Nelson City Territorial Local Authority

TLA	Registered Provider Name
NELSON CITY	Aaa Northlands Motel
	Abelia Motor Lodge
	Accolade Motor Lodge
	Ascot Motor Lodge
	Catalyst Nelson Ltd
	Centre Court Motel
	Chardonnay Motor Lodge
	Charles Court Motel
	Courtesy Court Motel
	Downtown Accommodation & Backpackers
	Driftwood Motel
	Greenwood Park
	Harvest Lodge Motel
	Kea Apartments
	Kings Gate Motel
	Midcity Motor Lodge
	Palace Backpackers
	Saxton Lodge
	The Bug Backpackers
	The Hotel Nelson
The Wakatu Hotel	
Tudor Lodge Motel	

Notes:

- Emergency Housing assistance payments are granted as Special Needs Grants.
- 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 provider.
- One registered supplier may provide accommodation across multiple premises with different trading names receiving payment through the single supplier record.
- These suppliers may have also received payments from clients who are located outside the TLAs listed.