



04 JUN 2021

Tēnā koe

On 8 March 2021, you wrote to Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *Request to know in what year was the Accommodation Supplement imposed on taxpayers*
- *the exact amount paid out to private landlords to date, and*
- *Exactly how much Taxpayers money has been paid to Private Landlords under the Emergency Accommodation Allowance to date.*

On 16 April 2021, your request was transferred from the Office of the Prime Minister to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry).

On 17 May 2021, the Ministry advised you that the due date for your request was being extended to 4 June 2021, as more time for consultation was necessary.

The Accommodation Supplement started from 1 July 1993, however, prior to this it was known as the Accommodation Benefit.

Accommodation Supplement is a non-taxable benefit that provides assistance towards a client's accommodation costs. A person does not have to be receiving a benefit to qualify for an Accommodation Supplement. You can find more information regarding the Accommodation Supplement here: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/corporate/annual-report/index.html.

The Accommodation Supplement is paid to assist with the payment of accommodation costs. There are three types of accommodation costs that the Accommodation Supplement can be used for:

- rent
- board, and
- home ownership costs.

You can find more information regarding accommodation costs at the following link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/accommodation-supplement/accommodation-costs-01.html.

Please see enclosed **Table One** which outlines the number of current clients receiving the Accommodation Supplement and the total weekly amount payable as at March 2021.

Table One: The number of current clients receiving the Accommodation Supplement and the total weekly amount payable as at March 2021.

Accommodation Supplement Type	Total Weekly Amount	Count of Current Clients
Total	\$37,475,994.03	360,552

The Ministry tracks Accommodation Supplement expenditure at a high level, however, it is not standard reporting to record the details of the sort of Accommodation Supplement costs it is being claimed for.

In the spirit of being helpful, please see enclosed, **Table Two** which outlines the total expenditure each year on the Accommodation Supplement.

Table Two: The total expenditure each year on the Accommodation Supplement.

Financial year ending June	Amount spent on Accommodation Supplement (Rounded to nearest \$000)
1993/94	\$351,319,000
1994/95	\$491,437,000
1995/96	\$561,794,000
1996/97	\$661,559,000
1997/98	\$792,708,000
1998/99	\$843,295,000
1999/2000	\$866,957,000
2000/01	\$795,081,000
2001/02	\$719,580,000
2002/03	\$705,983,000
2003/04	\$702,078,000
2004/05	\$749,652,000
2005/06	\$843,169,000
2006/07	\$876,995,000
2007/08	\$891,054,000
2008/09	\$989,280,000
2009/10	\$1,153,527,000
2010/11	\$1,196,648,000
2011/12	\$1,194,726,000
2012/13	\$1,177,274,000
2013/14	\$1,145,834,000
2014/15	\$1,128,826,000

Financial year ending June	Amount spent on Accommodation Supplement (Rounded to nearest \$000)
2015/16	\$1,163,654,000
2016/17	\$1,126,965,000
2017/18	\$1,203,509,000
2018/19	\$1,551,975,000
2019/20	\$1,707,646,000
2020/21	\$1,483,697,000

Notes for Table Two:

- Reduction in the year 2000/01, as Income Related Rents reintroduced from December 2000 (Housing NZ rents no longer partly paid through the Accommodation Supplement).
- 2004 to 2009 - ongoing increases in accommodation costs claimed.
- From mid-2008, Global Financial Crisis - large increase in beneficiary numbers.
- Covid-19 related economic slowdown - large increase in beneficiary numbers and in non-beneficiaries that became eligible for the Accommodation Supplement while in receipt of Wage Subsidy or Covid-19 Income Relief Payment.
- For financial year 2020/21 spending shown is for nine months to March 2021 only.

Various related data and descriptions pertaining to Accommodation Supplement may also be found in the 'Supplementary benefits' section of *The Statistical Report* that was published between 2002 and 2012: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/statistical-report/index.html.

In regard to your query regarding the exact amount paid for the Emergency Accommodation Allowance to date, there is no such thing as the Emergency Accommodation Allowance. Therefore, this part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act, as this information does not exist.

The Ministry however does report on the total amount spent on Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (EH SNGs).

The 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.

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.

If you would like to request the amount granted for EH SNGs, please email OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

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 regarding 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.

Ngā mihi nui



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