



09 JUN 2021

Tēnā koe

On 11 May 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

*The following information is being sought for the last five years. I request that the data please be provided in an excel spreadsheet.*

1. *The total number of individual clients who either have been or currently are in emergency housing in the Bay of Plenty region over the past 5 years.*
  - o *Can this please be broken down into individual years and all districts in the region.*
2. *The number of times individual clients in the Bay of Plenty have entered into emergency housing in the last 5 years.*
  - o *Can this please be broken down into individual years and all districts in the region.*
3. *The household makeup of all clients who have entered into emergency housing in the last five years.*
  - o *Can this please be broken down into individual years and all districts in the region.*
4. *The length of each client's stay in emergency housing for each individual time they have been in emergency housing.*
  - o *Can this please be broken down into individual years and all districts in the region.*

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 need. Assistance is generally granted for up to seven nights but can be extended, dependent on individual circumstances.

After these seven nights, Work and Income will arrange another appointment with the client to discuss their housing situation, and to determine if another grant is required. The Ministry works hard to support people receiving EH SNGs to secure a long-term housing solution, either through public housing or private rental accommodation.

The Ministry recognises that emergency housing is not a long-term solution, however, is a short-term solution for people who are potentially in a vulnerable situation. More information about EH SNGs is available on the Ministry's website at the following link: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/index.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/index.html).

The year 2020, saw 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.

You may be interested in the work on Emergency Housing being undertaken in Rotorua, further information about can be found at the following link: [www.beehive.govt.nz/release/rotorua-emergency-housing-update](http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/rotorua-emergency-housing-update).

For the sake of clarity, the Ministry will answer your questions in turn.

1. *The total number of individual clients who either have been or currently are in emergency housing in the Bay of Plenty region over the past 5 years.*
  - o *Can this please be broken down into individual years and all districts in the region.*

Please see enclosed **Appendix A**, which contains **Table One** showing the number of EH SNG granted, the amount paid and the number of distinct clients, broken down by years (April – March) and the district within the Bay of Plenty Territorial Local Authority (TLA).

Regarding the tables provided, please note that 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.

2. *The number of times individual clients in the Bay of Plenty have entered into emergency housing in the last 5 years.*
  - o *Can this please be broken down into individual years and all districts in the region.*

As clients can come in and out of Emergency Housing either as a main applicant or as part of another applicants declared household composition, the Ministry cannot report on the count of times individual clients enter into Emergency Housing without manually reviewing client files to determine if the client has left Emergency Housing, or has been incorporated into another application.

In order to provide you with this information, the Ministry would need to divert personnel from their core duties and allocate extra time to complete this task. The diversion of these resources would impair the Ministry's ability to continue standard operations and would be an inefficient use of the Ministry's resources. As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act, as it would require substantial manual collation. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your requests given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

3. *The household makeup of all clients who have entered into emergency housing in the last five years.*
  - o *Can this please be broken down into individual years and all districts in the region.*



The Ministry started capturing information about the household composition of EH SNG applicants from 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. To gather the household composition before 1 April 2020, Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of individual files. Therefore, this part of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

Please see enclosed in **Appendix A, Table Two** showing the household composition for the Bay of Plenty TLA, broken down by family composition and district for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

4. *The length of each client's stay in emergency housing for each individual time they have been in emergency housing.*
  - o *Can this please be broken down into individual years and all districts in the region.*

The Ministry cannot provide you with the length of each client's stay in Emergency Housing, as advised in response to question two, clients can come in and out of Emergency Housing either in their own application or as part of another applicant's declared household composition. As this information is held on individual client's files, Ministry staff would have to review thousands of individual files to provide you with this information. As such, this part of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

However, the Ministry can provide you with the average consecutive weeks that clients have stayed in Emergency Housing, as at the last grant received in the quarter.

Please see below **Table Three** which shows the number of average consecutive weeks distinct clients/households have staying in Emergency Housing broken down by district in the Bay of Plenty region for the period April 2020 – March 2021.

Territorial Local Authority within the Bay of Plenty region	April 2020 - March 2021
	Average Consecutive Weeks
KAWERAU DISTRICT	9
OPOTIKI DISTRICT	4
ROTORUA DISTRICT	16
TAUPO DISTRICT	9
TAURANGA CITY	11
WESTERN BAY OF PLENTY DISTRICT	9
WHAKATANE DISTRICT	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>

**Notes for Table Three:**

- Consecutive weeks is a calculation that tries to estimate how long a client has been in Emergency Housing for a continuous period. The Ministry looks at the number of weeks a client has had a grant in, where there is no more than 4 weeks between grants.
- If a client has two grants in one week, it still only counts as one for that week. This is based on the assumption that most grants are granted for seven nights.
- If there is more than four weeks between grants, the Ministry considers this the end of a spell in Emergency Housing. If a client comes back into Emergency Housing after 4 weeks their consecutive weeks count is reset to zero and a new spell is started.
- To protect confidentiality the Ministry of Social Development uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data. This data table has had random rounding to base three applied to all cell counts in the table. The impact of applying random rounding is that columns and rows may not add exactly to the given column or row totals. The published counts will never differ by more than two counts.

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 and any attached documents 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](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response in regard to Emergency Housing in the Bay of Plenty TLA, 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.

Ngā mihi nui



PP

Karen Hocking  
**General Manager  
Housing**

**Appendix A.**

**Table One. The number of EH SNG granted, the amount paid and the number of distinct clients/households, broken down by years (April – March) and the districts within the Bay of Plenty TLA.**

Territorial Local Authority within the Bay of Plenty region	April 2017 – March 2018			April 2018 – March 2019			April 2019 – March 2020			April 2020 – March 2021		
	Grants	Amount	Clients	Grants	Amount	Clients	Grants	Amount	Clients	Grants	Amount	Clients
KAWERAU DISTRICT	42	\$35,855.00	12	180	\$149,622.50	66	276	\$244,924.46	84	846	\$1,037,642.66	174
OPOTIKI DISTRICT	6	\$3,449.00	6	27	\$17,853.00	18	63	\$55,817.00	33	168	\$162,039.59	57
ROTORUA DISTRICT	981	\$895,599.27	363	4,476	\$4,950,223.66	1,041	11,433	\$16,174,827.98	1,551	11,085	\$21,075,039.20	2,049
TAUPO DISTRICT	75	\$46,388.00	48	246	\$166,221.74	129	843	\$789,093.31	225	1,863	\$2,882,911.94	510
TAURANGA CITY	786	\$650,028.62	327	2,019	\$1,986,715.17	618	4,404	\$5,735,717.72	849	4,674	\$10,151,684.59	1,092
WESTERN BAY OF PLENTY DISTRICT	60	\$41,979.55	42	159	\$154,203.59	93	402	\$451,698.98	129	684	\$1,165,885.66	189
WHAKATANE DISTRICT	96	\$67,601.32	39	213	\$158,740.00	117	444	\$457,919.29	183	894	\$1,182,041.70	246
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,049</b>	<b>\$1,740,900.76</b>	<b>837</b>	<b>7,317</b>	<b>\$7,583,579.66</b>	<b>2,079</b>	<b>17,865</b>	<b>\$23,909,998.74</b>	<b>3,054</b>	<b>20,214</b>	<b>\$37,657,245.34</b>	<b>4,323</b>

**Table Two. The household composition for the districts within the Bay of Plenty TLA, broken down by family composition and TLA for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.**

Territorial Local Authority within the Bay of Plenty region	Household Composition					Total
	Couple no children	Couple with children	Single no Children	Single with children	Unknown	
KAWERAU DISTRICT	3	6	60	33	0	<b>102</b>
OPOTIKI DISTRICT	3	0	15	18	0	<b>36</b>
ROTORUA DISTRICT	54	84	711	489	0	<b>1,338</b>
TAUPO DISTRICT	21	15	186	87	3	<b>309</b>
TAURANGA CITY	39	60	327	255	3	<b>684</b>
WESTERN BAY OF PLENTY DISTRICT	3	9	48	39	0	<b>105</b>
WHAKATANE DISTRICT	9	15	69	51	0	<b>147</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>1,419</b>	<b>972</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2,721</b>

**Notes for Table One and Two:**

- Emergency Housing assistance payments are granted as Special Needs Grants.
- The number of grants is not the same as the number of people. A person may have more than one grant within a period.
- 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.
- To protect confidentiality the Ministry of Social Development uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data. These data tables have had random rounding to base three applied to all cell counts in the table. The impact of applying random rounding is that columns and rows may not add exactly to the given column or row totals. The published counts will never differ by more than two counts.