



15 JUN 2021

On 7 May 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

1. *A breakdown by region of the top 10 Emergency Housing providers in each region who charge the highest amount per week, per room.*
2. *A total monthly figure for those top 10 emergency housing providers, showing what they are paid each month in total for emergency housing.*
3. *A breakdown by region of the top 10 Emergency Housing providers in each region who claim the most for damages.*
4. *How many people were living in emergency housing in central Wellington on the 1st May 2021 compared to the 1st April 2019?*
5. *How many people were living in emergency housing in NZ on the 1st May 2021 compared to the 1st April 2019?*

On 10 May 2021, HUD transferred your request in full to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) to respond to.

On 17 May 2021, the Ministry contacted you to refine the second question of your request. The Ministry asked you to clarify if there was a particular region that you were after or if you were after the top 10 Emergency Housing providers nationwide. Later that day, you confirmed that you were after the North Island regions and Canterbury.

For the sake of clarity, the Ministry will address each question in turn.

1. *A breakdown by region of the top 10 Emergency Housing providers in each region who charge the highest amount per week, per room.*

The Ministry is unable to provide you with the top 10 amounts paid to Emergency Housing providers per week, per room as different clients and households receive different rates depending on the size of the accommodation required and how soon the room is needed.

This information is recorded in notes on individual case files. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files. As such, this part of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

The Ministry has 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.

2. *A total monthly figure for those top 10 emergency housing providers, showing what they are paid each month in total for emergency housing.*

The Ministry has interpreted this part of your request to be for the top 10 providers paid the highest in the March 2021 quarter, per TLA.

Please see enclosed in the email that contains this response an excel spreadsheet containing **Appendix A**, which shows the top 10 Emergency Housing providers broken down by region, supplier names, the amount granted, the number of grants and the number of distinct clients.

- 3. A breakdown by region of the top 10 Emergency Housing providers in each region who claim the most for damages.*

The Ministry expects our clients to get the same quality of service as any other guest, and that our clients observe the rules and conditions of the accommodation supplier. A security deposit is available to suppliers to contribute to any damage costs, beyond normal wear and tear. Damages or losses are charged to the client and they are required to pay it back to the Ministry at an agreed rate.

Where a client or motelier has concerns around the quality and/or service of a motel, including behaviour of clients, the Ministry's regional housing team addresses these issues at the time directly with the provider.

To ensure providers for emergency housing are delivering accommodation to a suitable standard the Ministry:

- checks in regularly with clients on issues or concerns with their accommodation when approving subsequent Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (EH SNG)
- escalates concerns or complaints to the housing team who follow up directly at that time with the motelier
- monitors all ongoing issues or complaints received in relation to EH SNG accommodation with Moteliers.

In regard to question three of your request, damages to properties are classified and paid out as "other emergency grants". The Ministry cannot disaggregate payments regarding property damage or loss from other types of assistance granted under the 'other emergency grants' category. To provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to review over 5000 individual files. As such, this part of your request is also refused under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

More information about 'other emergency grants' can be found at the following link: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/other-emergency-grants-01.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/other-emergency-grants-01.html).

The Ministry has considered whether the Ministry would be able to response 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.

- 4. How many people were living in emergency housing in central Wellington on the 1st May 2021 compared to the 1st April 2019?*
- 5. How many people were living in emergency housing in NZ on the 1st May 2021 compared to the 1st April 2019?*

Please note that the Ministry reports on EH SNG data by quarter, and at the time of your request, the most recent period available was March 2021. Therefore, the Ministry cannot provide you with information as at 1 May 2021 or 1 April 2019.

Please see enclosed **Appendix B** which contains a table showing the amount granted, the number of EH SNG grants and the number of distinct clients broken



down by the Wellington TLA and nationwide (excluding Wellington TLA) during the March quarters for the years 2019, 2020 and 2021.

Regarding the table 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.

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 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.

It is important to note that post COVID-19 there has been an increase demand for Emergency Housing in the Wellington region. This has seen not only our clients staying longer in motels, but also an increase in the amount we have had to pay per room per week at times. It also reflects that we have had an increased number of families who require more than one room in some locations.

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 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 the top 10 Emergency Housing providers, 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 B.

**Table Two. The number of EH SNG grants, number of distinct clients and the amount granted, broken down by the Wellington TLA and nationwide (excluding Wellington TLA) for the March quarters 2019-2021.**

Territorial Local Authority	March 2019			March 2020			March 2021		
	Grants	Amount	Distinct Clients	Grants	Amount	Distinct Clients	Grants	Amount	Distinct Clients
Lower Hutt City	801	\$1,320,658.77	246	1,125	\$2,340,821.43	243	606	\$2,094,012.22	243
Porirua City	168	\$156,820.00	69	456	\$714,218.42	129	447	\$1,538,004.65	171
Upper Hutt City	96	\$110,298.00	36	198	\$339,881.02	63	147	\$568,406.91	66
Wellington City	363	\$331,131.45	174	735	\$1,050,595.44	273	2,181	\$7,636,616.65	831
Nationwide (excluding Wellington TLA)	15,834	\$21,160,627.55	5,328	29,625	\$49,624,163.26	7,914	30,930	\$65,968,280.20	8,781
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,265</b>	<b>\$23,079,535.77</b>	<b>5,850</b>	<b>32,139</b>	<b>\$54,069,679.57</b>	<b>8,625</b>	<b>34,314</b>	<b>\$77,805,320.63</b>	<b>10,092</b>

### Notes:

- 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. A value of one or two may be rounded to zero or three.
- 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 2 counts.
- Wellington TLAs are defined as Wellington City, Porirua City, Lower Hutt City and Upper Hutt City. A particular provider may receive payments from clients in more than one TLA.