



**13 MAY 2021**

Tēnā koe

On 7 April 2021, you wrote to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *A list of all the individuals living in hardship, extreme conditions causing homelessness.*
- *A list of all the individuals that have been declined assistance through MSD because those people will be responsible for volunteering their time and efforts to work on this project.*

On 13 April 2021, the Ministry contacted you to clarify your request. Following a discussion, you agreed to refine your request to the following information:

- *The number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants approved and declined for the Taranaki region, broken down by gender, age and ethnicity.*

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.

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.

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 your request, the lowest geographical boundary the Ministry reports on for clients receiving EH SNGs is Territorial Local Authority (TLA). As you are interested in the Taranaki region, the Ministry has provided EH SNG data for the TLAs of New Plymouth, South Taranaki and Stratford.

Please find the following three tables attached to this response as **Appendix A**:

- **Table One:** The number of Emergency Housing Special Need Grants granted and declined for the Taranaki Territorial Local Authorities for the quarter ending 31 March 2021, broken down by TLA and age group
- **Table Two:** The number of Emergency Housing Special Need Grants granted and declined for the Taranaki Territorial Local Authorities for the quarter ending 31 March 2021, broken down by TLA and gender
- **Table Three:** The number of Emergency Housing Special Need Grants granted and declined for the Taranaki Territorial Local Authorities for the quarter ending 31 March 2021, broken down by TLA and ethnicity

Please note, the number of declines does not necessarily mean the client is left unsupported in their housing need as their accommodation need may have been met in discussion with their case manager through other support. For example, when a person approaches the Ministry for assistance, there is a range of assistance available which may have resulted in other support or referrals being provided.

Please note, the ethnicity data is self-identified based on an individual's preference or self-construct. Clients are not required to provide the Ministry with their ethnicity, which is why an 'unspecified' option is included. In many cases, clients choose not to disclose their ethnicity.

In order to protect client confidentiality, the Ministry uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data. As such, the datasets provided to you have had random round to base three applied to the figures in the table. This means a value of one or two may be rounded to zero or three.

The impact of random rounding is that the columns and rows may not add exactly to the given column or row total however, the published figures will never differ by more than two counts and still allow you to see trends.

In instances when numbers cannot be rounded to three, numbers for some categories of clients have been suppressed or aggregated.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development publish a large amount of statistic regarding EH SNGs online as part of the Quarterly Housing Report. This can be found online here: [www.hud.govt.nz/community-and-public-housing/follow-our-progress/](http://www.hud.govt.nz/community-and-public-housing/follow-our-progress/)

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

If you are not satisfied with this response to your request for emergency housing data for Taranaki, 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



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