



23 November 2021

Tēnā koe

On 26 October 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 request to have the table below updated to include the data from 2008-2021, by year (or quarter if that is available).*

Please see attached **Appendix A** which contains **Table One** - the total number of working age clients on main benefits showing debts, by number, total, mean and median amount as at the end of September 2008 to September 2021.

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.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding information relating to client debt, 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

Bridget Saunders

Bridget Saunders
**Manager, Issue Resolution
Service Delivery**

Appendix A

Table One: Working age clients on main benefits showing debts, by number, total, mean and median amount as at the end of September 2008 to September 2021

Date	Clients	Clients with Debts	Total amount of Debt	Mean amount of Debt	Median amount of Debt
September 2008	269,607	136,857	\$300,365,000.80	\$2,194.70	\$715.12
September 2009	326,811	170,493	\$380,906,449.62	\$2,234.13	\$776.48
September 2010	338,211	185,409	\$422,861,614.23	\$2,280.71	\$778.51
September 2011	328,497	181,947	\$433,025,195.47	\$2,379.98	\$757.65
September 2012	320,943	177,033	\$454,658,471.94	\$2,568.20	\$792.00
September 2013	304,395	176,985	\$458,528,281.94	\$2,590.77	\$796.35
September 2014	294,321	176,820	\$471,815,988.78	\$2,668.34	\$804.00
September 2015	287,166	174,009	\$478,416,775.86	\$2,749.36	\$825.24
September 2016	283,875	176,283	\$509,708,158.07	\$2,891.45	\$900.08
September 2017	277,218	177,354	\$552,570,796.21	\$3,115.64	\$999.61
September 2018	284,316	186,138	\$622,691,411.20	\$3,345.30	\$1,118.20
September 2019	299,472	201,834	\$755,282,887.41	\$3,742.08	\$1,342.51
September 2020	369,300	234,891	\$935,794,634.10	\$3,983.95	\$1,463.62
September 2021	359,496	236,226	\$1,007,754,353.01	\$4,266.06	\$1,618.48

Notes:

- Debt balances are subject to change over time
- This is current debt owing and does not include non-current debt
- The table includes working age only (18 to 64 years)
- Main Benefits exclude NZ Superannuation, Veteran's Pension, Non-Beneficiary assistance, Orphan's Benefit and Unsupported Child's Benefit
- The debts reported include debts to a partner
- To protect confidentiality the Ministry 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