



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

27 April 2022

Tēnā koe

On 28 March 2022, your request was transferred to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) from the office of the Minister for Social Development and Employment, Hon Carmel Sepuloni. You requested, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *How much taxpayers money is being spent by government on housing Māori for the year ended 31st March 2022 that are homeless in Rotorua.*
- *Please also show the annual cost of such payments for the previous three years for comparative purposes.*

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 dependant on individual circumstances.

After these seven nights Work and Income arrange another appointment with the client to discuss their housing situation and if another grant is required. The Ministry works hard to support people in emergency housing to secure a long-term housing solution, either through public housing and private rental accommodation. Other options including transitional housing can also be explored as an option depending on availability and the individual's circumstances.

The Ministry recognises that motels are not a long-term solution or the solution that we want to deliver for people who are potentially in a vulnerable situation. They provide a short-term solution while more sustainable options are progressed. More information about EH SNGs is available at the following link:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/emergency-housing.html.

Some people may struggle to access suitable housing due to a lack of available supply or they simply may not be able to meet the high cost of housing which may result in them receiving EH SNG support for an extended period of time.

There are also a distinct group of people that face a range of complex issues that are a barrier, such as mental health and addictions, criminal history, or family violence. There are still others that need to live in a specific area, due to the need to access specialist care or educational needs for them or their family.

For people with high and complex needs, it can sometimes be challenging to identify suitable long-term housing, which can lead to longer stays in emergency housing. Work and Income work closely with these people to see what can be done to ensure that once they have a home of their own, they have the skills to sustain it, and the support they need to keep it.

Please find attached **Appendix One** containing **Table One**, showing the number of EH SNGs granted to clients who identify as Māori in the Rotorua Territorial Authority (TLA) and the total amount granted from 1 March 2018 to 28 February 2022.

The Ministry is unable to provide information to end of March 2022 as the month of data had not completed at the time of your request. You are welcome to make another request for the data for March 2022, if required.

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.

Please note, from December 2021, the Ministry has changed our ethnicity reporting to an approach called 'total response'. Making this change means we recognise all aspects of someone's ethnicity. This change reflects our clients more accurately, aligns our approach with Statistics New Zealand's reporting and reflects best practice. Ethnicity is about people's identity and sense of belonging. Ethnicity measures cultural affiliation, rather than race, ancestry, nationality, or citizenship. Ethnicity is self-identified, and people can identify with more than one ethnic group.

Previously, we reported ethnicity using an approach called 'prioritised ethnicity'. 'Prioritised ethnicity' means that we allocate people to a single ethnic group in an order of priority. The priority used by the Ministry previously was Māori, Pacific Peoples, Other and NZ European.

For more information about 'total response' for ethnicity reporting, please see: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/tools/how-we-report-ethnicity.

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'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 number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants for Māori clients in the Rotorua 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 or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui



P.P. Magnus O'Neill

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Appendix One

Table One: Number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants for clients who identify as Māori in the Rotorua Territorial Local Authority for the period 01 March 2018 to 28 February 2022.

Year ending	Number of Grants	Number of clients	Amount Granted
February 2019	3,093	486	\$3,381,715.16
February 2020	9,534	810	\$13,403,008.62
February 2021	9,474	1,128	\$17,592,873.04
February 2022	8,166	1,173	\$18,202,856.15

Notes:

- The year ending period used in this data is 01 March to 28/29 February.
- 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.
- Ethnicity data is self-identified and multiple ethnicities may be chosen by an individual as fits their preference or self-concept.
- Amount granted is not necessarily the amount spent.
- Grants are not the same as clients. A client may have more than one grant in the period.
- 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 published counts will never differ by more than two counts.