



11 July 2022

Tēnā koe

On 10 June 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *I am doing a project to understand which nz companies received the first wage subsidy back in March/April 2020. I understand that the raw data of company names, size, claim amount was made public in March 2021. I would like to request the raw data file.*

On 21 June 2022, the Ministry emailed you to refine your request by confirming you wanted the Ministry to provide the data set behind the COVID-19 wage subsidies from the Employer Search tool. The Employer Search tool can be found here: <https://services.workandincome.govt.nz/eps>.

On the same day you confirmed you are seeking the raw data file used in the Employer Search tool.

The Wage Subsidy Scheme has enabled rapid support for thousands of New Zealand businesses during this time of uncertainty and has ensured that employees are able to remain connected with their employers during the COVID-19 lockdown. The scheme was set up on a high-trust model to quickly deliver funds to support workers, families, and businesses.

The Ministry developed an online search tool with close involvement from the Privacy Commissioner to ensure compliance with the Privacy Act 1993, since updated to the Privacy Act 2020. To protect the privacy of employees and employers of small businesses, the Ministry has omitted employers with fewer than three employees from the search tool. Publishing this information on a public register would make the personal information of sole traders and other small businesses public. The aim of the search tool is not to identify individual persons who received the wage subsidy, and the protection of privacy for natural persons outweighed the public interest for this information.

Please see enclosed, the dataset which sits behind the search tool. This dataset includes the business name, the number of employees, and total amount of Wage Subsidy paid, as at 26 May 2022, for all employers with 3 or more employees.

Please note the following details regarding the dataset provided:

- The dataset does not include businesses that have repaid the subsidy in full.
- The dataset may not include accurate figures for businesses that have made repayments, as this information may take 2-3 working days to update.
- The information is accurate as at 26 May 2022. Changes may have been made since this date, including the aforementioned points.
- The dataset does not include regional or industry sector breakdowns.
- Business names are the names given by employers on the Wage Subsidy application. Businesses may be known by, or operate under, different names.

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

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding bulk data of the COVID-19 Wage Subsidy, including the August 2021 Wage Subsidy, 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



Stephanie Short  
**Manager**  
**Official and Parliamentary Information**