



20 September 2022

Tēnā koe

On 23 August 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *A breakdown of payments to each motel in the Canterbury region in the past 2 years, including the names of motels and a breakdown of costs per night.*

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.

You can find more information regarding EH SNGs at the following link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/emergency-housing.html.

Please see attached the Excel Spreadsheet which outlines a list of Emergency Housing providers, amount of EH SNGs granted in the Canterbury region for the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2022.

The Ministry is unable to provide you with the amount paid to Emergency Housing accommodation providers per night, as rates differ depending on the size of the room and length of stay. Information about per night motel costs are recorded in notes on clients file and Ministry would need to review thousands of files. As such, I am refusing this part of your request under

section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have 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.

However, in the interests of being helpful, please see attached an Excel Spreadsheet containing the names of accommodation suppliers in the Canterbury region who received Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants in the Canterbury region during the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2022 together with the amount granted to those suppliers.

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'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 Emergency Housing accommodation in the Canterbury region, 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



Karen Hocking
**Group General Manager
Housing**