



10 February 2023

Tēnā koe

On 13 January 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 the following information:

- *could you please supply any information for what was the Age Benefit and what Acts was it included in.*
- *I have attached a screenshot referring to Age Benefit in the Social Security Act 1964 so could you please supply the Social Security Act or any other legislation previous to 1964 that dealt with the age pension.*

On 1 April 1939, the Age Benefit came into force through the Social Security Act 1938, replacing the previous Old Age Pension that had been in place since 1898.

The eligibility age was set at 60 years, with a residency requirement of 20 years. There were also requirements relating to marital status, support of any children and being of good moral character and sober habits.

The payment level of the Age Benefit was 30 shillings per week, or £78 per year. The benefit was means-tested, and reduced by £1 for each £1 in excess of £52 per year. The benefit was also assets-tested and was reduced by £1 for every complete £10 of the net capital value of accumulated property.

The policy settings for the Age Benefit were adjusted over time, such as income exemptions, assets tests and residential qualification.

In 1977, the universal National Superannuation was introduced, replacing the Age Benefit.

You can read the relevant legislation here:

- The Social Security Act 1938: [Social Security Act 1938 \(2 GEO VI 1938 No 7\) \(nzlii.org\)](#)
- The Social Security Act 1964: [Social Security Act 1964 \(1964 No 136\) \(nzlii.org\)](#)
- The Social Security Amendment Act 1976: [Social Security Amendment Bill 1976 \(77-1\) \(nzlii.org\)](#)

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 discontinued Age Benefit, 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

pp Thomas Dalzell

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