



28 February 2023

Tēnā koe

On 1 February 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *How many people/families are living in cars, tents, caravans, etc in Palmerston North, in lieu of housing or hotels?*
- *What is the difference between 2017, 2020 and 2022?*

The Ministry contacted you on 7 and 13 February 2023 to further clarify your request. From your response to the first email on 7 February 2023 the Ministry has interpreted your request to be regarding Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (EH SNGs) in Palmerston North, and from this response you asked specifically:

1. *Are there people living in cars, caravans, tents, etc as permanent accommodation at present who have not applied, and do you have those numbers?*
2. *Do you have the figures for those who applied for the Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants?*

In response to Question 1, the Ministry does not collect information on people who may be living in cars, caravans, or tents who have not applied to the Ministry for an EH SNG. Therefore, I am refusing this request under section 18(g) of the Act as the information you had requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is either held by or closely connected to the functions of another department, Minister of the Crown or organisation.

In response to Question 2, this information is not collected as a matter of course. The Ministry would need to manually review a substantial number of individual case files to ascertain whether the accommodation people were living in at the time of their application for a EH SNG had been recorded, therefore I am refusing this 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.

As noted in the email to you on 13 February 2023, if you are interested in applications to the Social Housing Register, the Ministry can provide the accommodation people were living in at the time of their application to the Register. Please feel free to submit a further request if you require this information.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

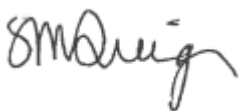
- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

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

If you are not satisfied with this response, 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



Sarah Quigan  
**Manager**  
**Official Information**