



9 March 2023

Tēnā koe

On 9 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 applications for assistance with school costs have been received from people in Wanaka, Cromwell, Alexandra, Maniototo and Roxburgh?*
- *Has the number of requests and/or the amount requested changed in the past two years? if so by how much, comparative figures please*

People on low incomes can apply for hardship assistance to help with school costs. For people already receiving a benefit from the Ministry, they can receive this help under an Advance Payment of Benefit (Advance). Assistance is also available if a person is not receiving a benefit through a Recoverable Assistance Payment (RAP).

Hardship assistance for school costs is recoverable and there are eligibility criteria that need to be met. More information about Advances and RAPs can be found here:

- Advances: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/advance-payment-of-benefit/school-costs-01.html
- RAPs: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/recoverable-assistance-payment/school-costs-01.html

School related costs can include school administration and examination fees, school stationery and school uniforms.

The Ministry of Education has guidelines that clarify what schools can charge for and what parents need to pay: www.education.govt.nz/school/funding-and-financials/fees-charges-and-donations/examples-of-what-familieswhanau-need-to-know-about-schoolkura-donations/.

Please find enclosed **APPENDIX**, with **Table One** which shows the number of grants for school related costs broken down by the type of costs, the amount

granted or declined processed in Queenstown-Lakes District and Central Otago District Territorial Local Authorities from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2022.

Regarding the table provided, please note that the Territory Local Authority (TLA) is estimated based on the clients' address at the time of the grant. 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, 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 hardship grants, the recorded address for a client may also be that of a trusted family member or friend who receives mail on their behalf.

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 financial assistance for school costs, 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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Issue Resolution