



8 May 2023

Tēnā koe

On 11 April 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *The Royal Commission made the following statement: "We heard from many women who were sent to homes for being unmarried mothers, where they were treated with contempt and subjected to physical, emotional and sexual abuse, then coerced or deceived into giving their babies up for adoption."*
- *Can you please inform me of the availability or otherwise of financial support through the MSD's Historic Claims process for mothers who were forced to relinquish their babies while they were in the care of faith-based maternity homes such as the Salvation Army's Bethany maternity homes?*

The Ministry's Historic Claims process provides an alternative way for people who were abused or neglected in the care, custody, or guardianship of, or who had come to the notice of, Child, Youth and Family or its predecessors before 1 April 2017¹ to resolve their claims without needing to resort to civil litigation. This means that to register a claim a person needed to be in care themselves as opposed to being a parent or guardian of a child in care.

The eligibility criteria for the Ministry's claims is available on page 7 of the Historic Claims Business Process Guidance (version 2.5), here: <https://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/historic-claims/historic-claims-business-process-and-guidance.pdf>. One of the key criteria is that a person has been in the care of the State, or has come to the notice of the State.

¹ Claims arising after this date are the responsibility of Oranga Tamariki.

Therefore, generally the Ministry's Historic Claims process would not be able to provide support, financial or otherwise, for mothers who were forced to relinquish their babies while they were in the care of faith-based maternity homes. The only exception to this would be where the mother herself was in the care, custody or under the guardianship of Child, Youth and Family or its predecessors at the time this decision was made. In those circumstances support would be provided as part of acknowledging their experience of abuse in state care as a whole, rather than for any specific experience or concern.

Further information about the Historic Claims process and eligibility criteria is available on the Ministry's website, here: <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/historic-claims/index.html>

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, 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



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Historic Claims