



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

20 November 2023

Tēnā koe

On 20 October 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

...the number of Emergency Housing residents at the MCentral Building at 17 Putney Way, Manukau City, numbers to be shown for each year since 2017 up until current. Also the amount that MSD has paid for these services and to whom.

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 depending on individual circumstances.

After seven nights, another appointment is arranged between the client and Work and Income to discuss their housing situation and if another grant is required. The Ministry works hard to support people in emergency housing to secure a long-term housing solution, either through public housing or private rental accommodation. Other options including transitional housing can also be explored as an option depending on availability and the individual's circumstances.

The Ministry recognises that motels are not a long-term solution or the solution that we want to deliver for people who are potentially in a vulnerable situation. They provide a short-term solution while more sustainable options are progressed. More information about EH SNGs is available at the following link:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/emergency-housing.html

Some people may struggle to access suitable housing due to a lack of available supply or they may not be able to meet the high cost of housing which may result in them receiving EH SNG support for an extended period of time.

There are also a distinct group of people that face a range of complex issues that are a barrier, such as mental health or addiction, criminal history, or family violence. There are still others that need to live in a specific area, due to the need to access specialist care or educational needs for them or their family.

For people with high and complex needs, it can sometimes be challenging to identify suitable long-term housing, which can lead to longer stays in emergency housing. Work and Income work closely with these people to see what can be done to ensure that once they have a home of their own, they are able to retain it, and the support they need to keep it.

Please refer to the attached **Appendix** consisting of a table which shows the number of EH SNG's, clients and amount granted to MCentral Building from 1 January 2019 to 30 September 2023. Please note, there were no hardship grants to MCentral Building prior to 2019.

It should also be noted that the sum of the distinct clients by year will differ from the total number of clients. This is due to clients being able to receive more than one EH SNG in a year. The client will, however, be counted as one in the total number of distinct clients regardless of the number of times they have received an EH SNG.

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 the number of EH SNGs granted to the MCentral Building, 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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Hocking', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Karen Hocking
Group General Manager
Housing

Appendix

The number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants, clients and amount granted to MCentral Building from 1 January 2019 to 30 September 2023

Year	Grants	Clients	Amount Granted
2019	738	129	\$1,718,287.80
2020	1,911	360	\$6,020,619.97
2021	1,890	273	\$6,893,224.38
2022	1,890	204	\$6,378,893.65
2023 (up to 30 September 2023)	1,446	138	\$4,666,832.16
Total (1 January 2019 to 30 September 2023)	7,872	918	\$25,677,857.96

Notes:

- The number of grants is not the number of individuals. A client can have more than one grant in each period.
- Amount granted may not be the same as the amount spent.
- Clients can be counted more than once. For this reason, the sum of distinct clients by year will be different from the total distinct clients.
- To protect confidentiality the Ministry of Social Development uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data.
- These data tables have had random rounding to base three applied to all cell counts in the table.
- The impact of applying random rounding is that columns and rows may not add exactly to the given column or row totals.
- The published counts will never differ by more than two counts.