



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

4 October 2023

Tēnā koe

On 6 September 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

What is the breakdown of Covid-19 wage subsidies for each branch of Lone Star Cafe and Bar Franchise Limited?

On 7 September 2023, the Ministry contacted you to request refinement of your request. As we did not hear a response from you, the Ministry contacted you again on 15 September 2023 as a reminder that we are seeking clarification and refinement of your request.

You responded on 17 September 2023 and advised that you wanted the total COVID-19 Wage Subsidy payments for Albany, Westgate and New Lynn branches of Lone Star Café and Bar Franchise Limited.

I will now respond to your refined request.

In March 2020 the Government implemented the Wage Subsidy, an economic package in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Wage Subsidy consisted of taxpayer funded subsidies for those who were in business and were either self-employed or employed others and met the eligibility criteria. Subsequently, there were extensions to the package to continue supporting employers in retaining their staff through the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions. All payments pursuant to the package and subsequent extensions are collectively referred to as the Wage Subsidy.

Please refer to the table below showing the total Wage Subsidy payments made to companies associated with the Albany, Westgate and New Lynn franchises of Lone Star Café and Bar Franchise Limited.

Table: Total Wage Subsidy payments made to companies associated with the Albany, Westgate and New Lynn franchises of Lone Star Café and Bar Franchise Limited.

Company	Lone Star Franchise	Payments Received
OT Investments Limited	Lone Star Albany	\$564,151.60
Bregus Limited	Lone Star Westgate	\$517,339.60
Damned Fine Food Limited	Lone Star New Lynn	\$337,390.80

If you are interested in another Lone Star franchise, you can use the 'COVID-19 Wage Subsidies - employer search' on the Ministry's website to check whether they received a subsidy. The search tool can be found here: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2020/covid-19/covid-19-wage-subsidy-employer-search.html.

Please note that a review of our records indicate that some Lone Star restaurants applied for a subsidy using their franchise name (e.g. 'LS Alexandra Park Limited' and 'L S Spitfire'), whereas others (such as the three you identified) seem to have applied using the name of a company owned by the franchisee, or a combination of both.

In the present case, to identify the company associated with the franchise, we undertook a review of publicly available online information (i.e. the *New Zealand Companies Register*) followed by a search of the Ministry's application system. However, because none of the applications we compiled for each company (with one exception) name a particular Lone Star restaurant, we cannot be certain that all (or any) of the employees included were Lone Star restaurant employees.

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 about Wage Subsidies received by Lone Star Albany, Lone Star Westgate, and Lone Star New Lynn with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding Wage Subsidy payments, 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

Bridget Saunders

Bridget Saunders
**Manager Issue Resolution
Service Delivery**