



26 August 2024

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 29 July 2024 in which you requested the following information:

"How many single New Zealanders lived in emergency housing motels from 2021 to 2023 - not lodge or backpackers accommodation".

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

I am unable to provide you with this information as it is held in notes on individual client files. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review a substantial number of individual client files. This would divert personnel from their core duties and the Ministry would need to allocate extra time to complete this task. As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act, as it would involve substantial manual collation.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge you for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its core business would be prejudiced.

However, please refer to **Appendix One**, which provides information about the number of single clients with no dependent children who were granted an Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (EHSNG) between 1 January 2021 and 31 December 2023, who stayed in emergency housing categorised by the Ministry as "Motel/Hotel accommodation".

Emergency Housing suppliers

The Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) registers hardship suppliers for the purpose of facilitating payments on behalf of eligible clients. Registered supplier status does not indicate a contractual relationship between the Ministry and a supplier, or an endorsement of the services provided. The contractual relationship is between the client receiving the EH SNG and the emergency housing supplier. The Ministry's role is to grant EH SNGs for the cost of emergency housing.

Emergency housing providers registered as suppliers with the Ministry can potentially offer clients several accommodation types. However, the Ministry only categorises the supplier in one of the following five categories: Motel/Hotel, Hostel, Holiday Park/Campground, Marae, Shelter.

It is therefore possible a supplier may provide both motel and backpacker accommodation, for example, but would only be categorized as providing "Motel/Hotel" accommodation in the Ministry's database. There is therefore the potential that the data we are providing you with in **Appendix One** will include information about clients who used their EHSNG to pay for backpacker accommodation, for example, rather than motel accommodation.

It is not possible to disaggregate the accommodation categories out any further, as the Ministry's database does not record more specific information about the accommodation type selected by the client. To do so, we would need to review the files of all clients who were granted an EHSNG over the two-year period for which you have requested information to ascertain whether the person stayed at a motel. This would also be refused under section 18(f) of the Act, as it would involve substantial manual collation.

You can read more about EHSNGs on the Ministry's website: workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/emergency-housing/index.html.

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

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 my decision on your request, 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. 

Magnus O'Neill
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services