



20 APR 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

On 5 March 2018, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *I would like the 2016/2017/2018 stats for emergency accommodation grants in the Horowhenua area.*
- *I would also like the stats for Otaki if possible, if these are not included in the Horowhenua information.*

On 1 July 2016, the Ministry introduced a non-recoverable Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (SNG). This grant has been made 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. Assistance is generally granted for up to seven nights, but can be extended dependent on individual circumstances. In most cases, the grant does not need to be repaid.

Due to the Emergency Housing SNG only coming into effect from 1 July 2016, there is no available data on the number of grants made prior to this date.

Further information regarding Emergency Housing SNGs can be found on the Ministry's website at: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/emergency-housing.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/emergency-housing.html).

Emergency housing need is assessed based on the number of people who apply for this service. Please find enclosed a table that shows the number and amount of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants at the Horowhenua, Ōtaki and Foxton Service Centres, broken down by quarter from December 2016 to December 2017.

Prior to the 2016 December quarter, emergency housing related hardship grants were coded in the Ministry's IT system as 'other emergency grants', which included hardship grants for various other emergency reasons. The Ministry cannot disaggregate emergency housing hardship payments from other types of assistance granted under the 'other emergency grants' category and any information regarding emergency housing grant payments prior to the December 2016 quarter is recorded in notes on individual case files.

As such I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act, as Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

Page 1 of 4

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

To enable you to interpret these statistics, you might be interested to know that during the March 2017 quarter, the Mackays to Peka Peka Expressway was being built. This affected housing availability in Levin as more people from Wellington started buying houses in the area. Consequently, this reduced the number of available rental properties in Levin. Additionally, many of these properties were being sold after only being on the market for a couple of weeks. This meant that a lot of people who were renting received notices to end the tenancy as the property they were renting had been sold.

Please note that in order to protect client privacy some values have been grouped together in accordance with section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act. The Ministry is unable to provide you with the exact number of grants and the amount granted by the Foxton and Ōtaki Service Centres in the December 2016 and June 2017 quarters, as the number of grants for each Service Centre is very low and releasing this information broken down by Service Centre is likely to risk identifying the individuals concerned. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information.

At the time of your request, no data was available for 2018 as the Ministry reports on this quarterly and it takes some time to prepare these reports following the end of each quarter. If you remain interested in this data, you are welcome to make a new request.

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 shortly. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development'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](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding the statistics for Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants in the Horowhenua and Ōtaki region, 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Scott Gallacher  
**Deputy Chief Executive, Housing**

**Number and amount of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants at the Horowhenua, Foxton and Ōtaki Service Centres for the quarters ending December 2016 to December 2017.**

<b>Quarter Ending</b>	<b>Service Centre</b>	<b>Grants</b>	<b>Amount Granted</b>
<b>December 2016</b>	Horowhenua	40	\$25,690.00
	Foxton	19	\$14,078.00
	Ōtaki		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>\$39,768.00</b>
<b>March 2017</b>	Horowhenua	83	\$61,364.00
	Foxton	9	\$4,391.00
	Ōtaki	10	\$6,200.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>\$71,955.00</b>
<b>June 2017</b>	Horowhenua	29	\$22,462.28
	Foxton	10	\$6,545.00
	Ōtaki		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>\$29,007.28</b>
<b>September 2017</b>	Horowhenua	7	\$4,036.00
	Foxton	7	\$5,020.00
	Ōtaki	0	\$0.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>\$9,056.00</b>
<b>December 2017</b>	Horowhenua	19	\$5,931.00
	Foxton	8	\$3,589.00
	Ōtaki	12	\$8,998.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>\$18,518.00</b>

**Notes:**

- This is a count of grants. A client can have more than one grant in the period.
- The figures above represent the amount granted. The total amount granted may differ from the amount spent.
- Emergency Housing assistance payments are granted as Special Needs Grants (SNGs).
- The Service Centre is based on the Work and Income site where the recommending Case Manager for the application was based at the time of the grant.
- In the quarters ending December 2016 and June 2017 the Foxton and Ōtaki Service Centre grants and amount granted have been grouped to avoid suppression as the numbers are low and would risk identifying individuals.