



18 DEC 2020

Tēnā koe

On 24 November 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *The number or recipients of the Student Loan Living Costs and Student Allowance, and the dollar amount of loan and allowance paid to students, divided up annually and by postcode.*

The student support system enables New Zealanders to participate in tertiary education and training. The main elements of student support are the Student Loan Scheme and the Student Allowance Scheme.

Student Loans provide funding for the tuition fees as well as a contribution towards course-related costs and living costs for full-time students. All amounts borrowed under the Loan Scheme have to be repaid. More information about Student Loans and living costs is available here: www.studylink.govt.nz/products/a-z-products/student-loan/index.html.

The Student Allowance is a weekly payment for eligible students to help with living expenses during study. This payment is based on the financial and personal circumstances of the student and their family and does not need to be paid back. More information about the Student Allowance is available here: www.studylink.govt.nz/products/a-z-products/student-allowance/index.html#null.

The Ministry publishes a large amount of data regarding StudyLink assistance, which might be of interest to you. This information is available at: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/studylink/index.html.

In response to your request, please find attached, as excel spreadsheets, the following two tables:

- **Table One:** The total dollar value of Student Allowance and Accommodation Benefits paid in the period of 2016 to 2020, broken down by the number of students, calendar year and postcode.
- **Table Two:** The total dollar value of Student Loan living costs paid in the period of 2016 to 2020, broken down by the number of students, calendar year and postcode.

Please note, in order to protect client privacy, some values are suppressed and are represented by 'S'. The Ministry is unable to provide you with the exact numbers as releasing this information is likely to risk identifying the individuals concerned. Secondary suppression rules have also been applied when required, for example when the other values provided can be used to calculate the suppressed value.

As such, this information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in the information.

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 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.

If you are not satisfied with this response to your request for Student Loan and Student Allowance statistics, 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



Jason Dwen
General Manager
Centralised Services