



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

Dear _____

On 13 August 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *A list of every facility which has been used for emergency housing in Rotorua, Tauranga, and the Western Bay of Plenty in the last two years.*
 - *Could this please have attached to it when the contract began, and how long the contract is for.*
 - *Could this please have attached when this has been renewed, when applicable.*
 - *Could this please have attached what the value of the contract/agreement was? And when the money started being paid.*
 - *For those no longer being used, can you please indicate when this stopped, and why.*

On 13 August 2021, you were advised that your request would be transferred in full to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) to respond to, as it aligned more closely with the Ministry's functions.

On 8 September 2021, you were advised that an extension was required in order to provide you with a response.

Please find enclosed in your response an Excel Spreadsheet containing the following table:

- **Table One:** A list of all accommodation providers that have received an Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (EH SNG) within the Bay of Plenty Territorial Local Authorities between 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2021, including the number of grants, number of distinct clients and the amount granted.

You will notice that the lists of registered emergency housing suppliers provided include suppliers from outside of the Wellington region. This is likely to be for payments made in arrears for a previous period of accommodation, or payments for a future period. A number of clients may have recently moved, but their address details have not yet been updated.

Please note that the registered supplier name is the name of the parent company of the accommodation supplier, and not necessarily the name of the accommodation itself. One registered supplier may provide accommodation across multiple premises

in different locations or trading names, receiving payment through the single supplier record.

Further, reference to I-Sites as suppliers may be reflective of payments in respect of council accommodation. Other suppliers may be listed due to a coding error when a client receives multiple assistance payments at one point in time, for example for petrol or groceries. For example, Caltex Porirua.

The current model of providing emergency accommodation uses Special Needs Grants (hardship payments) to pay for commercial accommodation options for people who are in urgent need of somewhere to stay. The Ministry does not contract motels/suppliers of accommodation to provide emergency housing. It should be noted that the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development does currently hold contracts with motels in Rotorua for the purpose of Contracted Emergency Housing (CEH) to address the urgent need in the area. This is the only location which CEH exists for any government agency.

EH SNGs were intended as a one-off grant, however the reality of how long people need to stay in this accommodation has changed dramatically over recent years. These grants are not able to be paid in advance of the need, or beyond what an individual is entitled to at the time of application. Given the high level of need many clients experience, subsequent grants are applied for in succession, and these are now paid for up to 21 days at a time.

Registering as a supplier for emergency housing does not create a contractual relationship between the Ministry and the supplier. Suppliers are free to cease providing services to the Ministry at their request. Clients are also free to reject an accommodation option suggested by the Ministry should they wish to. The Ministry suggests accommodation options based on a conversation with the client about their household's needs.

Under the EH SNG model, any agreements or conditions of stay are between the supplier and the client as the guest. The expectation is that commercial accommodation suppliers would provide accommodation services at standard commercial levels – which is why motels are generally used by the Ministry.

As such, your request for information relating to the contracts between the Ministry and accommodation providers receiving EH SNGs, is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

Being unsuitable for use of emergency housing does not always imply there are quality or safety issues. There could be other broader reasons such as location, cost and facilities required by our clients that mean we consider suppliers unsuitable.

For that reason, the Ministry is not able to disclose the names or locations of motels that the Ministry has decided not to use, as this would be unfair to those businesses. Releasing this information could unreasonably prejudice the commercial position of the suppliers in question. Therefore, your request is declined under section 9(2)(b)(ii) of the Act.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

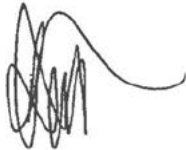
- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

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 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 regarding emergency housing facilities in the Bay of Plenty 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 or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



 Karen Hocking
**General Manager
Housing**