



30 August 2023

Tēnā koe

On 28 July 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- a) *A list of all premises in Rotorua Lakes Council's district which have occupants who are receiving an Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant.*
- b) *The number of occupants/rooms occupied by persons receiving the Grant at each premises.*
- c) *The length of stay of each occupant receiving the Grant.*

*We understand that the data may need to be anonymised, so individuals are not identifiable. If the length of stay of each occupant is to be anonymised, we request that the data is anonymised into no smaller than one month increments so that it can be identified how many occupants have stayed for one month, how many for two months etc.*

On 25 August 2023 the Ministry contacted you to advise further time was required to respond to your request. The reason for the extension was such that the consultations necessary to make a decision on your request could not reasonably be completed within the original timeframe.

Demand for housing across New Zealand is growing and many people are experiencing a severe and immediate need. This demand is generated by a shortage of affordable housing driving up house prices and rents. People on low incomes are most affected by rising housing costs and many seek financial help through the Ministry.

The Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (EH SNG) is 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. The Ministry pays EH SNGs directly to the accommodation supplier and assistance is generally granted for up to seven nights but can be extended dependant on individual circumstances.

After these seven nights Work and Income arrange another appointment with the client to discuss their housing situation and if another grant is required. The Ministry works hard to support people in emergency housing to secure a long-term housing solution, either through public housing or private rental accommodation. Other options including transitional housing can also be explored as an option depending on availability and the individual's circumstances.

The Ministry recognises that motels are not a long-term solution or the solution that we want to deliver for people who are potentially in a vulnerable situation. They provide a short-term solution while more sustainable options are progressed. More information about EH SNGs is available at the following link: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/emergency-housing.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/emergency-housing.html)

- a) A list of all premises in Rotorua Lakes Council's district which have occupants who are receiving an Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant.*

Please refer to the **Appendix** below for a list of the motels in Rotorua Territorial Local Authority (TLA) who received at least one EH SNG paid on behalf of a client, for the month of July 2023.

Please note, this table was compiled as a bespoke dataset specific to Rotorua to track progress on agreed actions. This information was collated through a combination of operational data and regional on the ground intelligence, meaning the EH SNGs recorded for this table are attributed to the Rotorua TLA based on where the supplier is located, which differs to the Ministry's usual approach of basing TLA on the primary client's latest recorded address. As such, this data may differ from other emergency housing data published on our website.

- b) The number of occupants/rooms occupied by persons receiving the Grant at each premises.*

The Ministry is unable to provide the number of occupants or rooms occupied at each emergency housing supplier as this information is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is either held by or closely connected to the functions of another department, Minister of the Crown or organisation. As such, this part of your request is refused under section 18(g) of the Act.

- c) The length of stay of each occupant receiving the Grant.  
We request that the data is anonymised into no smaller than one month increments so that it can be identified how many occupants have stayed for one month, how many for two months etc.*

In order to provide you with the length of stay of each occupant granted an EH SNG, the Ministry would need to divert personnel from their core duties and allocate extra time to complete this task. The diversion of these resources would impair the Ministry's ability to continue standard operations and would be an inefficient use of the Ministry's resources. As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act, as it would require substantial collation. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your requests 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.

You can instead find the standard duration of clients' stays in emergency housing for each TLA through the Ministry's published data, here: [www.ms.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/housing/emergency-housing.html](http://www.ms.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/housing/emergency-housing.html).

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 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, 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.

Ngā mihi nui



Karen Hocking  
**Group General Manager**  
**Housing**

## Appendix

**List of the motels in Rotorua Territorial Local Authority (TLA) who received at least one EH SNG paid on behalf of a client, for the month of July 2023.**

<b>Motel name</b>
Fenton Court Motel
The Grand Treasure Hotel Limited
Victoria Lodge Rotorua
B-K's Rotorua Motor Lodge
Accolade Lodge Motel
Gibson Court Motel – Rotorua
Manhattan Motel
Kerry's Motel
Rose Court Motel
La Mirage Motel