



21 December 2023

Tēnā koe

### **Official Information Act request**

Thank you for your email of 7 November 2023, requesting information about payment cards.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on each part of your request set out below.

***What percentage of WINZ preferred suppliers are big box retailers compared to smaller/local standalone businesses for bedding, clothing, and furniture?***

Please refer to **Table One** in the attached **Appendix** showing a list of suppliers who received a Special Needs Grant (SNG), Advance payment of a Benefit (ADV) or Recoverable Assistance Payment (RAP) for bedding, clothing or furniture on behalf of a client, during the 2022 calendar year.

Please note the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) has preferred suppliers for appliances such as fridge/freezers and washing machines. These are collectively known as 'whiteware' and are recorded under a separate category to furniture. As such, in the interest being helpful, we have also provided you with **Table Two** of the **Appendix**, containing a list of suppliers who received an SNG, ADV or RAP for 'Appliances' (excluding whiteware), 'Fridge/Freezer' and 'Washing Machine' categories, on behalf of a client during the 2022 calendar year.

The information regarding some individuals is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act in order to protect the privacy of natural persons. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information.

***Are you able to tell me how much was spent, via payment cards, at The Warehouse, Briscoes and Kmart nationwide in 2022?***

Please refer to **Tables Three, Four and Five** in the attached **Appendix** for the amount granted under SNG, ADV or RAP approved through a Payment Card to The Warehouse, Briscoes and Kmart suppliers during the 2022 calendar year.

***Are you able to tell me how much was spent, via payment cards, at Foodstuffs (North and South Island) and Countdown nationwide in 2022***

***compared to other food supplies on the preferred suppliers list (like standalone produce shops or butchers).***

Food suppliers registered with the Ministry are grouped together into one "Supplier Group". This allows for clients to use this assistance at different sites. When an SNG is granted for food assistance, it is granted to this "Supplier Group" rather than specific supermarkets or stores. As such, I am unable to provide you with this information as it is held in notes on individual case files. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review a substantial number of files. As such, I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Act. 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 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.

However, in the interest of being helpful, please see **Table Six** of the attached **Appendix**, which shows the amount granted for SNG approved through a Payment Card for the need category 'Food' during the 2022.

It should also be noted that the data provided to you is based on the amount granted and not necessarily the amount spent. As highlighted above, the amount spent via a payment card is recorded on a clients file and in order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review a substantial number of files.

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](mailto: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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

pp.   
Magnus O'Neill  
**General Manager**  
**Ministerial and Executive Services**