



11 September 2023

Tēnā koe

On 17 August 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

We are seeking information about use of the Work and Income Funeral Grant. Previously you have supplied us with a regional breakdown of the number of grants made and amount granted for the period 2018 – 2022. We would appreciate receiving the following additional information:

- *Number of applications in the same period (per region)*
- *Age, ethnicity and gender of those for whom the grant has been made, ideally also per region if available.*

The Ministry provides Funeral Grants to help those who have no other means to meet the costs of a funeral. A Funeral Grant assists people with actual and reasonable funeral costs and is not designed to cover all funeral expenses. It is income and asset tested and eligibility takes into consideration whether the deceased person has a surviving partner or dependent child, or if the deceased is a child.

Expenses that can be met through a Funeral Grant include:

- professional services with regard to preparing the body for cremation or burial (for example, embalming)
- cost of a casket
- newspaper notice costs
- hearse fees
- compulsory fees for the purchase of a burial plot
- cremation fees.

Further information on the eligibility for a funeral grant can be found on the Work and Income website, here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/funeral-grant.html

Please find the attached **Appendix**. This contains:

- **Table One**, the number of Funeral Grant applications from 1 January 2018 – 31 December 2022, broken down by region
- **Table Two**, the number of Funeral Grants granted from 1 January 2018 – 31 December 2022, broken down by age
- **Table Three**, the number of Funeral Grants granted from 1 January 2018 – 31 December 2022, broken down by gender
- **Table Four**, the number of Funeral Grants granted from 1 January 2018 – 31 December 2022, broken down by ethnicity

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.

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 or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

Bridget Saunders

Bridget Saunders
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