



23 June 2025

Tēnā koe

**Official Information Act request**

Thank you for your email dated 2 May 2025 to the Department of Corrections (Corrections), in which you asked for the information provided to people deported to New Zealand from Australia, under Australia's Migration Act 1958, about the support they may be able to access in New Zealand. Corrections partially transferred your request to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) on 29 May 2025.

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 under the headings below – some parts of your request are grouped together:

- *What information is provided to returning offenders deported under section 501 of the Migration Act 1958 upon arrival in New Zealand regarding support agencies, rehabilitation services, reintegration options, and related resources?*
- *What information is provided to returning offenders deported under section 109 of the Migration Act 1958 upon arrival in New Zealand regarding support agencies, rehabilitation services, reintegration options, and related resources?*
- *What information is provided to returning offenders deported under section 119 of the Migration Act 1958 upon arrival in New Zealand regarding support agencies, rehabilitation services, reintegration options, and related resources?*

The Ministry offers income, employment, and housing support to people who have been deported to New Zealand, including those who have been in prison. Offenders who have been deported to New Zealand under the Australian Migration Act 1958 are entitled to the same support that is available to any New Zealander who is reintegrating into the community after release from prison, if they meet the qualifying criteria.

Corrections is the lead agency responsible for managing deportees who are subject to supervision upon their return to New Zealand. Corrections work with people in this situation to ensure they are suitably supported. More information about that support is available at the following link: [www.corrections.govt.nz/our\\_work/in\\_the\\_community/sentences\\_and\\_orders/returning\\_offenders\\_order/faqs\\_for\\_returning\\_offenders](http://www.corrections.govt.nz/our_work/in_the_community/sentences_and_orders/returning_offenders_order/faqs_for_returning_offenders).

Once deportees have returned to New Zealand, they may be eligible to a Steps to Freedom Grant from the Ministry. This is a non-recoverable grant intended to help people pay for any initial costs they have when they're setting themselves back up in the community, after they have been imprisoned or held in custody on remand for 31 days or more.

If approved, the current amount payable for a Steps to Freedom Grant is up to \$350. The total amount is payable reduced by any amount held by the prison or other custodian on the applicant's behalf (including any amount held in the offender's trust account, canteen account or earnings account). Further information about the Steps to Freedom Grant can be found on the webpages below:

- Steps to Freedom Grant - [www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/steps-to-freedom-grant.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/steps-to-freedom-grant.html)
- Clause 15.4. Steps to Freedom Re-establishment Payments for Released, Sentenced and Remand Prisoners [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/legislation/welfare-programmes/special-needs-grants-programme/clause-15-4-steps-to-freedom-re-establishment-paym.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/legislation/welfare-programmes/special-needs-grants-programme/clause-15-4-steps-to-freedom-re-establishment-paym.html).

Ministry clients, including those who have recently been released from prison, can contact the Ministry's Work and Income General Enquiries line on 0800 559 009, to test their entitlement to a main benefit (such as Jobseeker Support), and other assistance. Work and Income can help clients get ready to apply for and find jobs, help them to find housing including Social Housing assessments, and help with the cost of essential living expenses. Further information is available here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/lost-job/deported-to-new-zealand.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/lost-job/deported-to-new-zealand.html) and here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/).

- *Data on returning offenders deported under sections 109, 116, and 501 of the Migration Act 1958 who arrived in New Zealand from Australia between 2015 and 2025 with a known mental health diagnosis, including diagnoses related to substance abuse or addiction disorders.*

I have decided to refuse this part of your request under section 18(f) of the Act, as substantial manual collation would be required to collate the data you have requested. If held, this information would only be contained within individual client files, which would each need to be manually reviewed to provide the data you have requested. 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 provide the data you have requested 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.

I will publish this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

If you wish to discuss this response with the Ministry, 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.

Ngā mihi nui

pp. 

Anna Graham  
**General Manager**  
**Ministerial and Executive Services**