



15 May 2025

Tēnā koe

### **Official Information Act request**

Thank you for your email of 27 March 2025, requesting internal policies and procedures for classifying a suburb's area code for Accommodation Supplement.

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

The Accommodation Supplement (AS) areas relate specifically to Statistical Area Units, as defined by Statistics New Zealand. These units are grouped into four AS areas reflecting broadly different levels of average rents for two- and three-bedroom rentals (the most common type of lettings):

Statistical Area Units were last defined by the Government Statistician on 26 June 2017, and are not equivalent to postal address suburbs, towns or cities, despite occasionally sharing similar names.

- Area 1 includes areas with the highest levels of average rent.
- Area 2 includes areas with somewhat lower average rents than Area 1.
- Area 3 includes areas with generally lower rents than Area 2.
- Area 4 includes any part of New Zealand not included in Areas 1, 2 or 3.

Every town, city and rural area across New Zealand falls into one of four AS Areas. People living in places deemed 'Area 1' may qualify for the highest maximum AS weekly payment, while those living in 'Area 4' may qualify for the lowest maximum weekly payment.

The AS Areas are made up of parts of New Zealand (as on 26 June 2017 defined by the Government Statistician). You can find your location on the Urban Area 2017 (generalised version) map overlay at the following publicly available link on the Stats NZ website: [datafinder.stats.govt.nz/data/?q=2017](https://datafinder.stats.govt.nz/data/?q=2017). You will be able to see the outline for the Parua Bay Area according to the Statistics New Zealand boundaries, which is Area 4, as is the surrounding area.

More information concerning AS Areas can be found at the following publicly available link on the Work and Income website: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/deskfile/extra-help-information/accommodation-supplement-tables/definitions-of-areas.html](https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/deskfile/extra-help-information/accommodation-supplement-tables/definitions-of-areas.html).

AS Areas were last updated on 1 April 2018. AS maximum rates are set based on median rents for one-bedroom, two-bedroom and three-bedroom (or more) private sector rental dwellings in each of the four AS Areas. The median rent information is provided by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, from tenancy bond rental data for private dwellings.

It may interest you to know that, on 25 March 2024, in the Government's response to the "Petition of Andrew Wilson: Rezone Accommodation Supplement eligibility for Queenstown residents", it was agreed that reviewing the AS more regularly would help it remain fit-for-purpose. You can find the petition, the petition committee report and the Government response here: [Petition of Andrew Wilson: Rezone Accommodation Supplement eligibility for Queenstown residents \(petitions.parliament.nz\)](https://petitions.parliament.nz/petitions/2023/03/25/petition-of-andrew-wilson-rezone-accommodation-supplement-eligibility-for-queenstown-residents).

The Government has commissioned further advice from officials on changes to the AS, including potentially updating AS Areas. You can read the announcement from the Minister of Social Development and Employment Hon Louise Upston here: [Government to consider accommodation solution | Beehive.govt.nz](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/news/government-to-consider-accommodation-solution).

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

Ngā mihi nui

pp. 

Anna Graham  
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**Ministerial and Executive Services**