



26 January 2026

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your request of 5 December 2025, requesting a breakdown of COVID-19 Wage Subsidy payments by ethnicity and region.

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

COVID relief payments to employees - broken down by race

What is the allocation of COVID relief payments to workers, divided by gender (Māori, Pākehā, Pasifika, Asian)?

Please send us all the documents, statistics, reports, instructions related to this topic. If possible, please break it down by gender (Māori, Pākehā, Pasifika, Asian, immigrant), region, and age.

Why are the outcomes this way for Māori? What is the department doing to resolve the differences? The Treaty of Waitangi is the law - these questions are relevant to the Crown's responsibilities under the Treaty.

I am refusing your request for an ethnicity breakdown of COVID-19 Wage Subsidy payments under section 18(g) of the Act as the information you had requested 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.

Your request for a regional breakdown of COVID-19 Wage Subsidy payments is refused under section 18(f) of the Act, as substantial manual collation would be required to collate this information. If held, this information would only be contained within individual applications, which would each require manual review to respond to your request. 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.

I acknowledge that you have requested this response be translated into Te Reo, however the Ministry currently does not have the internal capability to provide a formal translation and are unable to fulfil this request.

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.

If you are not satisfied with my decision on your request for a breakdown of COVID-19 Wage Subsidy payments by ethnicity and region, 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

pp.



Anna Graham
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services