



25 February 2026

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 27 January 2026, requesting historic, current and projected benefit recipient and Emergency Housing recipient breakdowns across Hamilton.

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

Historic and Current breakdowns

The Ministry is unable to provide data broken down by suburb. We have provided the requested data from the Ministry's Waikato region, broken down by service centre.

Please see **tab one** in the attached **Appendix One**, containing the following tables regarding benefit recipient data:

- **Table One:** Working age main benefit clients as at end of December 2017, December 2021 and November 2025 in 'Waikato' MSD Region, by ethnicity
- **Table Two:** Working age main benefit clients as at end of December 2017, December 2021 and November 2025 in 'Waikato' MSD Region, by ethnicity and service centre
- **Table Three:** Working age main benefit clients as at end of December 2017, December 2021 and November 2025 in 'Waikato' MSD Region, by gender and continuous duration
- **Table Four:** Working age main benefit clients as at end of December 2017, December 2021 and November 2025 in 'Waikato' MSD Region, by gender, continuous duration and service centre
- **Table Five:** Working age main benefit clients at end of December 2017, December 2021 and November 2025 in 'Waikato' MSD Region, by age and continuous duration
- **Table Six:** Working age main benefit clients as at end of December 2017, December 2021 and November 2025 in 'Waikato' MSD Region, by age, continuous duration and service centre

Please see **tab two** in the attached **Appendix One**, containing the following tables regarding Emergency Housing data:

- **Table One:** Table 1: Number of Emergency Housing grants during the years ending December 2017, 2021 and November 2025 in Waikato MSD region, by year, amount and number of clients
- **Table Two:** Number of Emergency Housing grants during the years ending December 2017, 2021, and November 2025 in Waikato MSD region, by year, service centre, amount and number of clients
- **Table Three:** Number of Emergency Housing grants during the years ending December 2017, 2021, and November 2025 in Waikato MSD region by year, service centre, age, amount and number of clients
- **Table Four:** Number of Emergency Housing grants during the years ending December 2017, 2021, and November 2025 in Waikato MSD region, by year, service centre, gender, amount and number of clients
- **Table Five:** Number of Emergency Housing grants during the years ending December 2017, 2021, and November 2025 in Waikato MSD region, by year, service centre, ethnicity, amount and number of clients

We would like to note that a new rules-based system related to EH was introduced on 26 August 2024, to ensure EH grants are targeted to people in genuine need and who have met their responsibilities.

When someone requests emergency housing assistance, the Ministry of Social Development's (the Ministry's) first looks at all their options to avoid homelessness. Staff will test the availability of alternative accommodation options first before they determine the person's eligibility for the EH Grant.

The most common reason for declining a person's EH application is because their need can be met in another way. This could include providing the person with financial assistance, such as a Housing Support Product, to help them sustain their existing tenancy, help with identifying and meeting the cost of a new rental property, or a referral to a transitional housing provider.

Forecasts

The Ministry does not have any forecasting that is broken down by region, and we have not done any forecasting for 2035. The Ministry's forecasting is all done at a national level. To provide you with the requested information, the Ministry would have to create new information.

As such, your request is refused under section 18(g) of the Act as the Ministry does not hold any official information and I have no reason to believe the information is either held by or more closely connected to the functions of another department, Minister of the Crown or organisation.

In the spirit of being helpful, we can provide you with some of our regular forecasting. Please see attached Appendix Two, containing REP/25/12/955 – Half Year Economic and Fiscal Update (HYEFU) 2025 – Emergency Housing forecast briefing.

You can find the HYEFU benefit number forecasts published online, here: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/hyefu/december-2025.html

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, 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



HYEFU 2025 Emergency Housing Assistance forecast briefing

BUDGET SENSITIVE – embargoed until 16 December 2025



OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT

Background

- > Forecasts are produced twice a year at the Budget Economic and Fiscal Update (BEFU) published in May and the Half Year Economic and Fiscal Update (HYEFU) published in December.
 - > There may be an additional forecast round in election years for the Pre-election Economic and Fiscal Update (PREFU) published prior to the election.
 - > Our forecasts are produced on a mid-point basis which means they are not best-or-worst-case scenarios.
 - > The Emergency Housing Assistance appropriation is a 'demand-driven' appropriation. This means at each forecast round it will be revised up or down in line with recent data, latest assumptions around factors that can influence the forecast, and the expected impacts of any operational or policy changes.
 - > This differs from a 'capped' appropriation which can only change with agreed policy decisions.
 - > Changes to forecast expenditure are not managed against Budget allowances (unless otherwise agreed), as they are a result of factors largely outside Ministers' control.
 - > Therefore, if the forecast is revised down, the difference is simply returned to the Crown. Conversely, if the forecast is revised up, Ministers are not required to fund this from other areas.
- > Key factors that can influence benefit expenditure include:
 - historical trends in the number of people receiving support and the payment rates received
 - demographic factors, including population trends
 - policy changes that impact demand driven payments, for example, the tightening of the gateway to Emergency Housing
 - operational changes implemented by MSD
 - our own professional judgement when we believe past trends may not repeat in the future or when there is limited data available.
 - > The HYEFU 2025 benefit forecasts were finalised on 5 November 2025.
 - > The next forecast update will be BEFU 2026 which will likely include actual data up to March 2026.



Forecast Summary

- > The Emergency Housing Assistance appropriation has been revised down at HYEFU 2025 due to both a lower expected number of households in Emergency Housing (EH), and a lower average cost per grant.
- > The number of households in EH is expected to increase slowly until mid-2026, before increasing further to around 690 households by mid-2027 as time-limited funding for EH support services ends (on 30 June 2026).
- > The average cost per grant has also continued to fall and has been lower than forecast since BEFU 2025.

How does the Emergency Housing forecast relate to Target 8?

- > The Government target for EH represents a goal for MSD and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to work towards. MSD uses the Budget forecasts to seek a sufficient level of funding for the appropriations over the next five years which are largely based on recent benefit trends and the economic outlook.
- > As MSD/HUD maintain the achieved target, any new trends will be included in future forecast rounds as they are updated for the latest information available.
- > The EH forecast is based on current activities and interventions.
- > The HYEFU 2025 forecasts go to June 2030 and the Government targets are to be achieved by December 2029.
- > MSD's EH forecast only includes households that got an EH Grant¹.

¹HUD manages the number of Contracted Emergency Housing (CEH) households as a component of the EH target. Although the number of CEH houses in Rotorua has reduced to zero, HUD remains a joint policy lead for the EH target.



The number of Emergency Housing (EH) households has been revised down at HYEFU 2025

- > From September 2025 to June 2026 EH household numbers are expected to rise to 490 due to:
 - > Fewer available Transitional Housing (TH) places as HUD exits remaining TH motel contracts.
 - > Fewer new Social Housing places expected to be delivered than in recent years.
 - > The introduction of Kainga Ora's Tenancy Management Framework, which strengthens their ability to end tenancies due to anti-social behaviour and persistent unpaid rent arrears.
- > From July 2026 to June 2027 household numbers are expected to increase to 690 due to:
 - > The end of time-limited funding for EH support services (on 30 June 2026) which provides MSD with additional capability to respond to housing distress.

Emergency Housing Households Actual and Forecast Number of Households

