



4 May 2026

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act Request

Thank you for your email of 24 April 2026 requesting information about Jobseeker Support clients receiving their benefit while overseas and policies and process for overseas travel for beneficiaries.

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 separately below.

Kia ora, I would like to request information on the number of Jobseeker Support beneficiaries who are permitted to travel outside New Zealand while continuing to receive their fortnightly payments. Please provide this data for the 2024–25 and 2025–26 periods (up to the most recent available date) by district/region. In addition, I would appreciate details on: -- the approved reasons for their travel, -- the average duration of time spent overseas, and -- the total amount of benefits paid to these beneficiaries during their time abroad.

Your request for this information is being 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 client files, 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.

In addition, can you please explain the process or reasons why they are allowed to still receive their benefits while abroad

This information is publicly available through the following links:

- www.workandincome.govt.nz/on-a-benefit/overseas-travel/main-benefit/temporarily-overseas.html
- www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/jobseeker-support/changes-and-reviews-jobseeker-support/absence-from-new-zealand-01.html

- www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/jobseeker-support/changes-and-reviews-jobseeker-support/approved-travel-reasons-01.html
- www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/jobseeker-support/changes-and-reviews-jobseeker-support/permitted-travel-reasons-01.html
- www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/jobseeker-support/changes-and-reviews-jobseeker-support/essential-travel-01.html
- www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/jobseeker-support/changes-and-reviews-jobseeker-support/job-interviews-or-follow-up-on-a-job-prospect-01.html
- www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/jobseeker-support/changes-and-reviews-jobseeker-support/overseas-medical-treatment-01.html
- www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/jobseeker-support/changes-and-reviews-jobseeker-support/examples-of-applying-the-absence-from-new-zealand-01.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