



11 May 2026

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 14 April 2026, requesting information about the statistics of New Zealand Superannuation (NZS) and Veteran's Pensions (VP).

I have considered your questions under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), and my decision for each of your question is set out below.

- 1. In your quarterly reports about NZ Super I see that in December 2025 the number of NZ Super recipients was 959,508 (plus Veterans Pension 4,710), a total of 964,218.*

At the same time, the numbers of Statistics NZ say that in December 2024, only about 870,000 people over 65 lived in New Zealand.

To compare apples with apples, your number for December 2024 was 932,928.

This is still quite a discrepancy, and even more so because quite a number of people over 65 do not receive NZ Super because 1. their overseas pension is higher than NZ Super, 2. they have not fulfilled the residency requirement, or 3. they are in prison, or any other reasons.

Before the law change in 2020 about 6,300 pensioners had included their non-qualified partners in their NZ Super payments. Even if I deduct them from your NZ Super recipients number (926,628), or add them to the Statistics NZ number to 876,300), I still see a discrepancy of 56,628.

This means that 870,000 people over 65 lived in New Zealand in December 2024 but you paid NZ Super to 932,928 people.

Would you please explain the discrepancy between your statistics and the NZ Statistics numbers.

Who are these 56,628 people?

The Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) holds information on the number of NZS and VP recipients. However, these figures do not represent the total number of people who are aged 65 or over living in New Zealand, as some recipients may reside overseas.

In addition, the Ministry does not hold information on how Stats NZ compiles its data on people aged 65 or over living in New Zealand. In order to explain the

difference you have identified, we would be required to access Stats NZ data and undertake a detailed comparison of individual-level records across both datasets.

The Act provides access to official information that is held by agencies. It does not require agencies to create new information in order to respond to a request. The information you are seeking in this case is not held by the Ministry and would need to be created.

I am therefore refusing this part of your request under section 18(g) of the Act, as the information is not held by the Ministry and I have no reason to believe it is either held by or more closely connected to the functions of another department, Minister of the Crown or organisation.

- 2. Do you have the number of people over 65 who have applied for NZ Super but do not receive a cent because their overseas pension is higher than NZ Super?*

(I know that this is not the absolute number of people who do not receive NZ Super due to their overseas pensions because many do not even apply for NZ Super because they know that their application would be declined. But this opens up an even bigger gap between the number of over 65s living in New Zealand and the number of people receiving NZ Super.)

- 3. You do have numbers for ethnicity in your NZ Super statistics. But do you also have numbers of pensioners who are born-and-bred New Zealanders and pensioners who have been born overseas?*
- 4. The same question as under point 3, but the numbers of people with deducted overseas pension according to their origins: How many of these people are migrants and how many are returning Kiwis with entitlement to an overseas pension?*
- 5. How many pensioners with overseas pensions do NOT receive the Winter Energy Payment?*

Please refer to the attached **Appendix** for the following information:

- **Table One:** The number of NZS and Veteran's Pension (VP) recipients aged 65 or over whose payments were suspended because their overseas pension exceeded their New Zealand entitlement, as at the end of March 2026.
- **Table Two:** The number of NZS and VP recipients by country of birth, as at the end of March 2026.
- **Table Three:** The number of NZS and VP recipients with an entitlement to overseas pensions, broken down by country of birth, as at the end of March 2026.
- **Table Four:** The number of NZS and VP recipients who did not receive the Winter Energy Payment (WEP), as at the end of August 2025.

Please note that data in **Table Four** is provided as at the end of August 2025 because WEP is paid seasonally from 1 May to 1 October each year, rather than on a fortnightly basis like New Zealand Superannuation. When data is extracted at the end of September, WEP payments to NZS recipients have already ceased, which would incorrectly show no recipients receiving WEP. Using end-of-August data provides an accurate snapshot of WEP receipt by NZS and VP recipients.

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