



13 October 2020

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s 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe s 9(2)(a)

I refer to your request dated 24 August 2020 to the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) requesting information about public housing in Rotorua and across New Zealand. On 7 September 2020, parts five to eight of your request were transferred to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (the Ministry) under section 14(b) of the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), as the information you requested is more closely aligned with this Ministry's functions.

You have asked for data about public housing in Rotorua. Over the last six to seven years, the local population in Rotorua has grown strongly as people have moved to Rotorua from other parts of the country. In addition, more returning New Zealanders have chosen to live in Rotorua, and fewer people are leaving to live elsewhere in the country or overseas. New housing construction has not matched this population growth and new consents by population is one of the lowest in the country. This has increased the cost of housing in Rotorua significantly, with rents up over 50 percent in five years. This has also put additional strain on public housing.

The Ministry and other agencies have been working to support the council and Te Arawa (local Iwi) to develop a housing strategy that brings together the short, medium and long-term actions to address the housing shortage. The final strategy is set to be confirmed by council and Te Arawa soon and will enable council, Te Arawa, providers, and government agencies to identify a critical path of actions required.

In July 2020, Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities (Kāinga Ora) entered into a long term partnership with Ngati Whakaue Tribal Lands to progress development of 1,100 sections over the next five to ten years and enable rezoning and master planning of up to a further 1,500 sections on Maori-titled land over the next decade. The Government's announcement in July 2020 of shovel ready investment of \$55m in stormwater and transport infrastructure will enable development of the initial 1,100 sections and support employment in the region.

Q: How many state houses are located in Rotorua, and how many of these are vacant and why?

Firstly, I would like to provide some clarity on the Government's response to public housing. Public housing is owned or leased by Kāinga Ora and, since 2014, Community Housing Providers (CHPs). For the purpose of answering your request, your references to 'state houses' have been taken to mean public houses provided by Kāinga Ora. This housing is tenanted by people from the public housing register, which is managed by MSD.

As at 30 June 2020, there were 653 state housing properties in Rotorua, 11 of which were vacant.

Reasons for the vacancies included:

- 4 were receiving long-term maintenance
- 6 were receiving repairs and would soon be available to new tenants
- 1 was ready to let.

For additional context around this data, you may wish to visit the website of Kāinga Ora at www.kaingaora.govt.nz/publications/housing-statistics/

Q: How much revenue from rent did the government make from social housing in Rotorua in the 2017-2018 and 2019-2019 financial years?

State housing tenants pay Kāinga Ora rent capped at a percentage of their assessable income up to a certain threshold. Where a tenant's assessable income is above the threshold, they pay progressively more rent until the market rent is reached. The difference between the income related rent and market rent is paid by the Government via the Income Related Rent Subsidy (IRRS).

The following table breaks down the amount Kāinga Ora receives directly from its tenants in rent, and the amount that it receives from the Income Related Rent Subsidy.

Rent revenue received in Rotorua Territorial Local Authority

Financial year	IRRS subsidy (\$)	Rent Paid (\$)
2017/18	6,210,057	3,481,692
2018/19	7,588,478	3,622,726
2019/20	8,800,839	3,670,494

The increase in IRRS can largely be attributed to rising market rents in Rotorua.

Your other questions relate to public housing throughout New Zealand. We are seeing more people asking for help with accommodation than ever before due to a shortage of rental properties, increasing rents, and the economic impact of COVID-19. We will continue to build more public houses and make sure people move into them, and off the Public Housing Register as quickly as possible. In 2018, the Government released its plan to increase public housing supply across New Zealand over the four years to June 2022. The Public Housing Plan provides information about where, how many, and what type of additional public housing places are planned and can be found at: www.hud.govt.nz/community-and-public-housing/increasing-public-housing/public-housing-plan/

We are aiming to secure around 6,400 additional public housing places nationwide: 1,600 places per year on average across New Zealand between July 2018 and June 2022 – bringing the total number of public housing places in New Zealand to around 73,628 by June 2022. In addition, Budget 2020 invested \$570m to deliver an additional 8,000 homes: approximately 6,000 public housing homes and 2,000 transitional homes.

For the year to 30 June 2020, the Ministry in partnership with Kāinga Ora and registered Community Housing Providers (CHPs) delivered 2,074 public housing places exceeding the yearly target set out in the Public Housing Plan by 474 places. The Ministry will continue to work with Kāinga Ora, CHPs and the wider housing sector to achieve the Government's goal of increasing the supply of public housing.

Q: How many Māori people are currently in social housing throughout NZ; and how many Māori are waiting for social housing?

Q: How many people overall are currently in social housing throughout NZ, and how many are waiting for social housing?

The following table breaks down the number of people who have identified as Māori, and the total number of people in public housing compared to those on the housing and transfer registers. Please note that ethnicity is self-reported and voluntary. This category also only reflects the ethnicity of the primary applicant on the register, and not any others in the household.

Tenancies and housing register/transfer register data as at 30 June 2020

	Māori	All
In public housing throughout New Zealand	25,937	69,950
On housing register	9,162	18,520
On transfer register	1,484	3,359

Please note that:

- The housing register captures the housing requirements of people who have applied for public housing.
- The transfer register is prioritised by need and consists of applicants who are already in public housing but have requested and are eligible for a transfer to another public housing property.
- The numbers listed represent the total number of tenancies/applicants/households and not the actual number of people.

I hope you find this information useful. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Ministry at OIA_Requests@hud.govt.nz.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review of my response by the Ombudsman, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on the Ombudsman's website www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

As part of our ongoing commitment to openness and transparency, the Ministry proactively releases information and documents that may be of interest to the public. As such, this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on our website.

Ngā mihi nui



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