



DOIA20/21060579

s 9(2)(a)

Dear s 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email on 28 May 2021 to the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

We are seeking more information on the numbers, ages and ethnicities of, children in families receiving the Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant. Please supply the following information under the Official Information Act (OIA):

- *A full breakdown of the demographics by age, gender, ethnicity, parental and partnership status of families with children receiving the Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant, and demographic data by number of, age, ethnicity of children in families receiving this grant,*
- *The number of sole parents with children under the age of five years old receiving the Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant from 2016 until current,*
- *What family type makes up the figure of 'unknowns' currently listed on the emergency housing list and what is the reason for this 'unknown'?*
- *Copies of all reports to the Ministers of Housing and Social Development related to children in emergency housing since June 2019.*


On 10 June 2021, MSD advised you that the last part of your request – reports to the Minister of Housing – was transferred to Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga – Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (the Ministry) to respond.

I have identified one paper in scope of this request that I am releasing to you with redactions under the following sections of the Act:

Section of Act	Reason to withhold
9(2)(a)	protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons
9(2)(f)(iv)	maintain the constitutional convention for the time being which protects the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials

The above is summarised in the attached document schedule.

Paragraph 27 of *BRF20/21120811 Aotearoa New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan: Report back on the action plan areas brought forward due to COVID-19* is also in scope of your request. The excerpt on the following page is released to you with some information withheld under section 9(2)(f)(iv).

27. Another focus will be on the delivery of the next tranche of transitional housing places. As part of the 18 immediate actions of the action plan, the Government build programme has delivered 1,000 additional transitional housing places to reduce use of motels as emergency housing. This includes 605 places for families with children, reinforcing the Government's commitment to reducing child poverty and improving the wellbeing of all young people. 2,000 additional transitional housing places are due for delivery by June 2022, as part of the 8,000 new public and transitional homes committed to in Budget 2020. s 9(2)(f)(iv)
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The Cabinet Paper *Improving the provision of emergency housing in Rotorua and potential expansion* is in scope of your request but is refused under section 18(d) of the Act, as it will soon be made publicly available on the Ministry's website. Please note that there were associated documents to this Cabinet Paper. These papers have not been provided because they contain the same information that is contained in the Cabinet Paper that will soon be published online.

Another two papers are also in scope of your request but are refused under section 18(d) of the Act, as they are already publicly available. You can find links to these in the attached document schedule.

In terms of section 9(1) of the Act, I am satisfied that, in the circumstances, the decision to withhold information under section 9 of the Act is not outweighed by other considerations that render it desirable to make the information available in the public interest.

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.

Yours sincerely



Anne Shaw
Deputy Chief Executive
Housing Supply, Response and Partnerships

Annex 1: Document schedule

Title	Section of the Act applied
AMI20/21030466 Release of the Children's Rights in the COVID-19 Response Report	9(2)(a) 9(2)(f)(iv)
BRF20/21120811 Aotearoa New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan: Report back on the action plan areas brought forward due to COVID-19 (excerpt)	9(2)(f)(iv)
Cabinet Paper: Improving the provision of emergency housing in Rotorua and potential expansion Will soon be available here: www.hud.govt.nz/news-and-resources/proactive-releases/	18(d)
Cabinet Paper: Preventing and Reducing Homelessness in New Zealand Available here: www.hud.govt.nz/assets/News-and-Resources/Proactive-Releases/f41acf93b7/Cabinet-Paper-Preventing-and-Reducing-Homelessness-in-New-Zealand.pdf .	18(d)
BRF18/19060316 Preventing and responding to homelessness across New Zealand Available here: msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/official-information-responses/2020/february/r-20200205-all-papers-and-other-documents-internal-and-external-correspondence-relating-to-motels-and-caravan-parks-being-used-for-emergency-or-transitional-h.pdf (pages 4-27)	18(d)



Date:	5 March 2021	Security level:	In Confidence
Priority:	Medium	Report number:	AMI20/21030466

Hon Dr Megan Woods Minister of Housing	For noting
Hon Poto Williams Associate Minister of Housing (Public housing)	For noting
Hon Peeni Henare Associate Minister of Housing (Māori housing)	For noting
Hon Marama Davidson Associate Minister for Housing (Homelessness)	For noting

Name	Position	Telephone		1 st contact
Jeremy Steele	Manager, Housing Needs and Responses	04 832 2471	s 9(2)(a)	✓

N/A

<input type="checkbox"/> Noted <input type="checkbox"/> Seen <input type="checkbox"/> See Minister's notes <input type="checkbox"/> Needs change <input type="checkbox"/> Overtaken by events <input type="checkbox"/> Declined <input type="checkbox"/> Referred to (specify)	Comments
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Aide-mémoire

Release of the Children's Rights in the COVID-19 Response Report

For: Hon Dr Megan Woods, Minister of Housing
Hon Poto Williams, Associate Minister of Housing (Public Housing)
Hon Peeni Henare, Associate Minister of Housing (Māori Housing)
Hon Marama Davidson, Associate Minister of Housing (Homelessness)

Date: 5 March 2021

Security level: In Confidence

Priority: Medium

Report number: AMI20/21030466

Purpose

1. This aide-mémoire provides you with an overview of *Children's Rights in the COVID-19 Response*, a report produced by the Children's Convention Monitoring Group¹ that will be publicly released on Sunday 7 March 2021. Officials provided comment on the material and have received an embargoed copy (attached).

Overview of the report

2. *Children's Rights in the COVID-19 Response* (the report) is the third in a series of reports that highlight where Aotearoa is making progress and where action is still needed on the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC).
3. The report looks at what is required to ensure the Government's response to COVID-19 delivers for children and young people. For example, honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi, embedding children's rights in law and improving the quality and use of data about children and young people. It also highlights some of the impacts of COVID-19 on children and young people and the policy responses to them.
4. The report considers the impact of COVID-19 on children and young people's right to housing (page 30). It discusses how housing shortages and rising rents, combined with changes in circumstances due to COVID-19, led to increased demand for urgent accommodation. In the June 2020 quarter, 1,738 people aged 16-24 years old received an emergency housing special needs grant – a 47% increase on the previous quarter. The report also notes that 11% of people in COVID-19 motel accommodation were single parents, couples with dependent children and young people, and a small number of multi-generational families.
5. The Children's Convention Monitoring Group is supportive of the accelerated longer-term actions in the Aotearoa New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan (HAP) and the work of Te Tūāpapa Kūākainga – Ministry of Housing and Urban Development on transitional housing.
6. Manaaki Rangatahi ki Tāmaki Youth Homelessness Collective provide comment in the report outlining their concern around the lack of youth-specific supports and services available to address the housing needs of those under the age of 18 (page 31). They call on the Government to invest in research to better understand the size and scope of youth homelessness and to prioritise the development of a Youth Homelessness Strategy.

¹ The Children's Convention Monitoring Group is convened by the Office of the Children's Commissioner and members include the Human Rights Commission, Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa, Save the Children NZ and UNICEF NZ.

The report has one housing-specific recommendation

7. The report provides 31 recommendations for government agencies to better deliver on children's rights in responding to COVID-19 and beyond.
8. On the topic of housing, the recommendation is:
"Prioritise the rights of children and young people, and those caring for children, in policy responses to the housing crisis. This includes initiatives to increase the availability of affordable and healthy housing, the implementation of housing standards, and initiatives to address youth homelessness and provide transitional pathways into safe, healthy homes. Expedite implementation of the Homelessness Action Plan and ensure data on homelessness includes disaggregated data and children and young people." (page 34, recommendation 18)

Update on initiatives mentioned in recommendations

Prioritise the rights of children and young people, and those caring for children, in policy responses to the housing crisis

9. The HAP has a strong focus on rangatahi/young people and work to deliver on the Government's vision for homelessness has the potential to underpin several UNCROC principles, for example the right to health, education, and personal development.
10. Children are a priority in the Government's transitional housing build programme; of the additional 1,000 transitional housing places delivered to date, 605 are for families with children.

Initiatives to increase the availability of affordable and healthy housing

11. Budget 2020 delivered funding for an additional 6,000 public and 2,000 transitional homes with a focus on new builds and Kāinga Ora led delivery. In addition to previous Budget housing initiatives in 2018 and 2019, over 18,000 public housing places are on track to be delivered by 2024.
12. The Government is committed to increasing housing supply and addressing affordability, as outlined by the Prime Minister in January 2021. Work will complement recent directions by the Government that the Reserve Bank of New Zealand consider the impact on housing when making monetary and financial policy decisions and longer-term reforms already underway through the Urban Growth Agenda and replacement of the Resource Management Act.

Implementation of housing standards

13. The healthy homes standards became law on 1 July 2019 and cover improvements to heating, insulation and ventilation, and addressing issues with moisture ingress and drainage and draught stopping. There is a staggered compliance timeline:
 - 1 July 2021 – Private landlords must ensure that their rental properties comply within 90 days of any new tenancy
 - 1 July 2021 – All boarding houses must comply
 - 1 July 2023 – Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities and registered Community Housing Provider houses must comply
 - 1 July 2024 – All rental homes must comply

Initiatives to address youth homelessness and provide transitional pathways into safe, healthy homes

14. The HAP acknowledges that rangatahi/young people are overrepresented in homelessness statistics and addressing youth homelessness is a key priority of the plan.

15. Funding allocated through the first round of the Local Innovation and Partnership Fund will support new initiatives, with a focus on responding to youth homelessness and supporting Rainbow communities. A second round of funding will be held in 2021.
16. The HAP includes immediate actions that focus on at-risk groups at critical transition points, including extending housing support for rangatahi/young people leaving Oranga Tamariki care. Budget 2019 contained \$153.7 million over four years for Oranga Tamariki to establish a new service supporting rangatahi/young people to transition successfully from statutory care and youth justice to adulthood. Oranga Tamariki has delivered 33 additional supported housing places for rangatahi/young people leaving care, and this will increase to 168 by 2023.
17. The Ministry of Social Development established a Flexible Funding Programme in 2020 to provide financial support to families with children who are staying in emergency housing and who have immediate needs arising from living in that accommodation.

Expedite implementation of the Homelessness Action Plan

18. In 2020, six of the longer-term actions in the HAP were brought forward to respond to emerging needs and build on the COVID-19 response. One of these actions was further responses for cohorts at risk of homelessness, particularly for rangatahi/young people.
19. Note: A report was provided to Ministers on 19 February 2021 that recommends agencies prioritise progressing actions and advice on measures for rangatahi/young people, s 9(2)(f) (iv) [BRF20/21120811 refers].

Ensure data on homelessness includes disaggregated data on children and young people

20. The HAP recognises that there is a need for better data and evidence on homelessness and includes an immediate action to improve evidence and data. This action is underway and includes improving data and evidence on specific cohorts affected by homelessness.