



14 JUN 2018

Mr Tom Kennedy  
[fyi-request-7802-57474218@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-7802-57474218@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Mr Kennedy,

On 11 May 2018, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *I request the total number of people who the Ministry of Social Development relocated to Westport between 2014 and 2017.*

There are two ways in which the Ministry assists clients to meet costs of relocating.

In June 2016, the Ministry introduced the Relocation from Auckland Assistance (RFAA) to assist clients to meet relocation or re-establishment costs to move outside of the Auckland area. Three clients moved to the West Coast using the assistance before it was discontinued in January 2018. The Ministry takes very seriously its responsibility to protect the privacy of its clients. The Ministry is unable to provide you with the exact number of clients who relocated to Westport through RFAA, as the release of this information could risk identifying the individuals concerned. As such, this information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act. The need to protect their privacy outweighs any public interest in this information.

The Ministry can also provide Special Needs Grants (SNGs) for re-establishment to help people in specific circumstances re-establish themselves in a community. Although this grant is not solely for relocation assistance, it may be used by clients for that purpose. Between 2014 and 2017, the Ministry issued over 40,000 SNGs for re-establishment. Unfortunately, the Ministry is unable to provide you with the number of clients who relocated to Westport between 2014 and 2017 using the re-establishment grant, as this information is held in notes on individual case files. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files. As such, your request for this information is refused under section 18(f) of Official Information Act as it requires substantial manual collation. 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.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact [OIA\\_Requests@msd.govt.nz](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this decision regarding the number of people the Ministry helped relocate to Westport between 2014 and 2017, 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'EB' with a stylized flourish.

Elisabeth Brunt  
**General Manager, Ministerial and Executive Services**