



Adam Irish

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21 January 2022

Tēnā koe Adam Irish,

On 14 January 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *The total level of public funds spent on the Wage Subsidy that went to the following businesses: gambling based businesses, gaming machine societies, tobacco-based businesses, and religious institutions.*
- *The total level of funding/level of Wage Subsidy provided to strip club and brothel businesses.*

The Wage Subsidy Scheme has enabled rapid support for thousands of New Zealand businesses during this time of uncertainty and has ensured that employees are able to remain connected with their employers during the COVID-19 lockdown. The scheme has been set up on a high-trust model in order to quickly deliver funds to support workers, families and businesses.

The Ministry has developed an online search tool, with close involvement from the Privacy Commissioner to ensure compliance with the Privacy Act 2020, for the public to search for information on businesses who have received wage subsidy payments. The search tool is available on the Work and Income website at the following link: <https://services.workandincome.govt.nz/eps/search>

To protect the privacy of employees and employers of small businesses, the Ministry has omitted employers with fewer than three employees from the search tool. Publishing this information on a public register would make the personal information of sole traders and other small businesses public. The aim of the search tool is not to identify individual persons who received the wage subsidy, and the protection of privacy for natural persons outweighed the public interest for this information.

The tool enables you to complete a search of each business that you require information about. The Ministry is therefore refusing your request under section 18(d) of the Act on the basis that the information is publicly available.

Please note that you will not be able to identify whether the business is a strip club or brothel. The Ministry does not collect information concerning the exact nature of the

applicant's business. Accordingly, your request for the total level of funding provided to strip club and brothel businesses is refused under section 18(g) of the Act as the information is not held by the Ministry and there are no grounds to believe that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

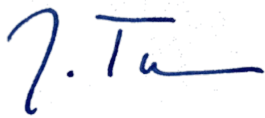
- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes.

If you wish to discuss this response 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 response regarding the total level of funding provided to specific businesses, 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.

Ngā mihi nui



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Magnus O'Neill  
**General Manager**  
**Ministerial and Executive Services**