

Hon Dr Megan Woods

MP for Wigram
Minister of Housing
Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister for Building and Construction
Associate Minister of Finance



Margaret Mechum

fyi-request-19143-2a70d025@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Margaret

I refer to your request of 16 April 2022 for the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

- *I request all advice (including briefing notes, reports, memos, aides memoire, minutes, emails, or any other written advice) received by you or your office on the subject of rent controls since 1 January 2020.*

I can advise that Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga – the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently consulted with my office regarding its response to a similar OIA request (for all briefings and background papers regarding rent controls or other market intervention to reduce rental costs from November 2020 to 2 March 2022). On 22 April 2022 the OIA response was proactively released on HUD's website. Therefore, this part of your request is declined under section 18(d) of the OIA because it is publicly available. You can view the documents at: www.hud.govt.nz/assets/News-and-Resources/Proactive-Releases/DOIA21-22030706-response_Redacted.pdf.

I am also aware of a Cabinet Paper titled 'Economic Response to Future Resurgences of COVID-19' which was published on The Treasury's website in March 2021 and was not included in HUD's published OIA response. I have included a link to it in my response - www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2021-03/economic-response-resurgences-covid-19-cab-20-sub-0531.pdf.

The following documents have been identified as in scope of your request in the timeframe 1 January 2020 to 1 November 2020:

- 1) *BRF19/20030594 – COVID-19: Residential Tenancies Act Amendments*
- 2) *BRF19/20050670 – Supporting the transition of renters and rental markets given the impact of COVID -19*
- 3) *BRF19/20060701 – Reform of the Residential Tenancies Act 1986: Change to rent increase provisions commencement date*
- 4) *BRF20/21080751 – Possible restrictions on tenancy terminations under COVID-19 Alert Level 4*
- 5) *Cabinet Paper – Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill – Further proposal for a Supplementary Order Paper*
- 6) *Cabinet Paper – Expanding access and level of rent arrears assistance temporarily to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on housing outcomes*
- 7) *AMC20/210900038 - Talking points for possible Cabinet oral item 5 October 2020: Update on impact of rent increase freeze expiry and report back on Healthy Homes Standards compliance statements*

Five of the documents listed above (document numbers 2,3,4,5 and 7) are attached. The information that does not relate to rent controls has been redacted because it is out of scope of your request. In addition, some information has been withheld under the following sections of the OIA:

- 9(2)(a) To protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons
- 9(2)(g)(i) To maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any public service agency or organisation
- 9(2)(h) To maintain legal professional privilege

The remaining two documents (documents 1 and 6) are declined under section 18(d) of the OIA because they are publicly available. You can view the documents at:

www.hud.govt.nz/assets/News-and-Resources/Proactive-Releases/Briefing-COVID-19-Residential-Tenancies-Act-amendments-.pdf
covid19.govt.nz/assets/Proactive-Releases/proactive-release-2020-july/H4-Paper-and-Minute-Expanding-Access-to-Rent-Arrears-Assistance.pdf

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.

Yours sincerely



Hon Dr Megan Woods
Minister of Housing