



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

26 September 2023

Rashid Ameer

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Tēnā koe Rashid Ameer

On 5 September 2023, your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) was transferred to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry). You requested the following information:

I am a private tertiary institution lecturer at IPU New Zealand Palmerston North. I am keen to examine the financial market performance of the COVID-19 wage subsidy recipients (only those registered businesses with employees of more than 20). I intend to compare their financial market performances with those companies that got jobkeeper subsidies in Australia throughout 2020-2022. I have already obtained the information on Australian companies from the Australian treasury website.

I have come across the COVID-19 wage subsidies-employer search tool from the following website [https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fservices.workandincome.govt.nz%2Feps%2Fsearch&data=05%7C01%7CMinisterialServices%40mbie.govt.nz%7Cb011ffc6199a44ea072308dba9ce17dc%7C78b2bd11e42b47eab0112e04c3af5ec1%7C0%7C0%7C638290474851949806%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoimC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=uQnNGOTFnzUm8iepTo6Brp7UKMhatAK12HUDCsg2VBs%3D&reserved=0], but it is very time-consuming to search for individual employers.

- *I request you to provide the list of employers (with more than 20 employees).*

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

The Ministry developed an online search tool with close involvement from the Privacy Commissioner to ensure compliance with the Privacy Act 2020. Employers with fewer than three employees were omitted from the search tool

to protect the privacy of employees and employers of small businesses. 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 outweighs the public interest for this information. The online search tool can be found here: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2020/covid-19/covid-19-wage-subsidy-employer-search.html.

You will find enclosed the dataset which sits behind the online search tool. This dataset includes the business name, the number of employees, and total amount of Wage Subsidy paid, as at 8 September 2023, and limited to employers who applied for 20 or more employees for at least one of the subsidies, as per your request.

Notes for the dataset:

- The dataset does not include businesses that have repaid the subsidy in full.
- The dataset may not include accurate figures for businesses that have made repayments, as this information may take 2-3 days to update.
- This information is accurate as at 8 September 2023. Changes may have been made since this date, including the aforementioned points.
- That dataset does not include regional or industry sector breakdowns.
- Business names are the names given by employers on the Wage Subsidy application. Businesses may be known by, or operate under, different names.

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. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter and attachment on the Ministry's website. Your personal details will be deleted, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding a list of employers with 20 or more employees that received the Wage Subsidy Scheme, 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 or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

Bridget Saunders

Bridget Saunders
Manager
Issue Resolution