



15 April 2026

Tēnā koe Hayden

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 19 March 2026, requesting information about forecasted expenditure on food-related welfare and hardship assistance, and analysis of enabling food community networks.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on your request set out below.

- *Treasury's current estimate of the total annual government expenditure on food-related welfare and hardship assistance, including food grants, emergency food assistance, and the component of benefit payments attributable to food costs.*

While the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) monitors the number of hardship grants by category, we do not forecast estimated expenditure for hardship for food. As such, your request for this information is refused under section 18(g), as this information is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is either held by or closely connected to the functions of another department, Minister of the Crown or organisation.

You may be interested in our monthly benefit factsheets, where we publish data on Special Needs Grants by food, including expenditure and number of grants. You can find this information here: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/monthly-reporting/

- *Any analysis of the net fiscal impact of enabling community food networks – taking into account the potential reduction in food-related welfare expenditure, diet-related health costs, and regional economic multiplier effects, against the fiscal cost of tax concessions.*

The Ministry was unable to locate any information in scope of this part of your request. As such, this section of your request is also refused under section 18(g), as this information is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is either held by or closely connected to the functions of another department, Minister of the Crown or organisation.

You may be interested in the Material Hardship Lead Indicators Dashboard, which can be found online, here: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-

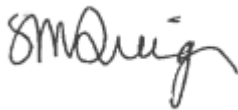
[work/publications-resources/information-releases/2025/material-hardship-lead-indicators-dashboard.html](https://www.msd.govt.nz/work/publications-resources/information-releases/2025/material-hardship-lead-indicators-dashboard.html)

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

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 my decision on your request regarding forecasted expenditure for food, 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

pp. 

Anna Graham
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services