

12 AUG 2016

Tania Te Whenua
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Tēnā koe Ms Te Whenua

Thank you for your email of 15 July 2016, in which you request, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), information about the Māori Land Court Special Aid Fund. In particular you have made the following requests:

1. What is the total annual budget for Māori Land Court Special Aid and is this budgeted amount consistent or does it vary each year?
2. If the amount is variable what does it depend on?
3. What was the total amount of Māori Land Court Special Aid approved (spent) in each Māori Land Court district and in the Māori Appellate Court in the last financial year?
4. What was the total amount of Māori Land Court Special Aid approved (spent) each year for the previous five financial years?

The Māori Land Court Special Aid fund (the fund) is established by section 98(1) of Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993 (the "Act") and funds are paid out of public money for those purposes set out in sections 98(3) and 98(9) of the Act.

Whilst the fund is administered by the Ministry through the Chief Registrar of the Māori Land Court, unlike general legal aid, the special aid fund is a judicially driven fund and applications are made directly to, and any payment from the fund is determined by, the Court and not by the Ministry or the Legal Services Commissioner.

In response to your questions I can advise that:

1. For Crown appropriation and contingent liability purposes the Ministry budgets a total of \$1 million dollars for the fund annually;
2. In the past five financial years there has been no variation to the budgeted appropriation for the fund;
3. The total amount paid from the fund in the 2015/16 financial year was \$951,728.58 excluding GST (but including disbursements).

Of this amount, \$22,469.55 excluding GST (but including disbursements) was paid by order of the Māori Appellate Court.

A breakdown of payments from the fund by Māori Land Court District is **attached**.

4. A breakdown of the total amount of payments from the fund in each of the five previous financial years is **attached**.

If you are not satisfied with my response to your request you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the OIA. The Ombudsman may be contacted by writing to the Office of Ombudsman at PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143, by phone on 0800 802 602 or by email to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Heoi anō, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tania Ott', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tania Ott
General Manager (Acting), Special Jurisdictions

Ref: 57932

Encl: Breakdown of payments from the fund by Māori Land Court
Breakdown of the total amount of payments from the fund in each of the five previous financial years

**Funds approved for payment from the Māori Land Court Special Aid Fund
By Māori Land Court District
2015/16 Financial Year**

Taitokerau Māori Land Court District	\$ 153,143.24
Waikato-Maniapoto Māori Land Court District	\$ 123,415.80
Waiariki Māori Land Court District	\$ 144,541.56
Tairāwhiti Māori Land Court District	\$ 85,363.08
Tākitimu Māori Land Court District	\$ 230,228.43
Aotea Māori Land Court District	\$ 206,236.99
Te Waipounamu Māori Land Court District	\$ 8,799.48

Note: Payments exclude GST but include disbursements and include payments by both the Māori Land Court and Māori Appellate Court.

**Total payments from the Māori Land Court Special Aid Fund
For the past five financial years**

2015/16	\$ 951,728.58
2014/15	\$ 1,244,045.49
2013/14	\$ 1,009,485.03
2012/13	\$ 961,386.09
2011/12	\$ 704,064.35