

8 July 2025

s 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe s 9(2)(a)

I write in response to your request to Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities dated 9 June 2025, for the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

From my notes, I understand the following:

- *Your region includes Tauranga, Whakatane, Thames, Coromandel, Taupo, and Rotorua*
- *In this region, Kainga Ora has approximately 3000 tenancies*
- *Currently, 259 of these are in arrears.*

When we spoke, you mentioned the increase in arrears that occurred with the government's shift in focus during the COVID-19 pandemic. Could you please provide an approximate dollar value of the arrears for our region? I also understand that you are asking clients to commit to an additional weekly payment of 10% of their income, for eight weeks, toward their arrears. If they can do this, their arrears will be reduced to a maximum of 12 weeks. I'm interested to know how successful this has been to date.

As you are aware, we have made changes to how we manage rent debt to help prevent tenants from getting too far behind, speed up repayment, and address some historic issues. The following information has been provided to you as context about our approach to managing rent debt.

We are continuing to support tenants who fall behind on their rent. If a tenant misses a rent payment, we'll get in touch quickly to understand why they have fallen behind and get back on track with their rent. Any missed rent must be repaid, and we can help put a reasonable repayment arrangement in place if needed. As part of this, we have set minimum repayment amounts. It is important to note that this amount is not 10 percent of a tenant's income. In most situations, the minimum weekly repayment will be 10 percent of the tenant's rent, unless a higher repayment amount is agreed to. In cases where 10 percent of the tenant's rent is less than \$10, a minimum repayment amount of \$10 will apply.

We do not want to end tenancies, but we will if tenants are not meeting their obligations to reduce their rent debt, are skipping rent payments or refusing to work with us. If this happens, we will seek to ensure tenants will not have accumulated more than 12 weeks' worth of rent debt when their tenancy is ended.

When we introduced this new approach, a small number of Kainga Ora tenants had accumulated more than 12 weeks' worth of rent debt. We are helping those tenants get on top of their rent debt faster by reducing the amount owed to a level that is more realistic for them to repay in full. It is important to note that we only did this for tenants who had more than 12 weeks' worth of rent debt at the start of February 2025 and who are both consistently paying their rent and making reasonable payments to reduce their debt. In return for this one-off help, tenants must continue reducing their debt and paying their rent on time and in full. If that does not happen, we will take steps to end their tenancy. The partial rent reduction period has now concluded.

More information about our approach to rent debt is available here: [Our approach to rent debt :: Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities](#)

We can advise that as at the end of May 2025 the total number of Kainga Ora tenancies in the Bay of Plenty region was 2,664. The table below details the following information you requested for the Bay of Plenty region:

- **Rent Debt:** The total dollar value of rent debt in the Bay of Plenty region, and the number of tenants behind on their rent as at March 2020 (COVID period), January 2025 (prior to partial rent debt reduction), and May 2025 (the most recent available data).
- **Debt Reduction:** The total dollar value of the rent debt reduction given to eligible tenants and the number of tenants who received a partial reduction in what they owe as at end of May 2025.

Rent debt and partial rent reduction for the Bay of Plenty region

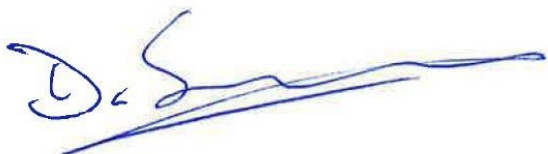
Rent Debt	Rent debt Amount	Number of tenants
March 2020	\$201,171	271
January 2025	\$536,480	272
May 2025	\$284,619	255
Debt Reduction <i>(total amount of rent debt reduction applied in the region between February and May 2025, inclusive)</i>	\$234,839	52

You have asked whether this partial rent debt reduction approach has been successful. We have seen positive signs to date, with around 73 percent of Bay of Plenty tenants who were potentially eligible to receive a reduction in what they owe making changes to ensure they receive this reduction. We can advise that 71 tenants owed more than 12 weeks' worth of rent and were potentially eligible to receive a reduction in what they owed. As at the end of May 2025, 52 of the 71 tenants had received that partial rent debt reduction, bringing their rent debt down to a level that is more realistic for them to repay in full.

For additional information, relating to how Kāinga Ora manage debt, we recommend visiting our website: [https://kaingaora.govt.nz/en NZ/about-us/our-role-as-a-landlord/our-approach-to-rent-debt/](https://kaingaora.govt.nz/en/NZ/about-us/our-role-as-a-landlord/our-approach-to-rent-debt/)

Please note that Kāinga Ora proactively releases some responses to official information requests where possible. Our response to your request may be published at <https://kaingaora.govt.nz/publications/official-information-requests/>, with your personal information removed.

Nāku iti noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Soughtton', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Daniel Soughtton
DCE – Central