

6 May 2022

s9(2)(a)



Thank you for your request of 11 March 2022 to Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

1. *How much money was spent on Kainga Ora housing in Palmerston North and Manawatū in the past 12 months to fix damage made to properties by the tenant or occupants?*
2. *How many work orders were issued for Kainga Ora properties in Palmerston North and Manawatū in the past 12 months to have repairs made after damage was done by tenants or occupants?*
3. *How much money was spent on Kainga Ora housing in Palmerston North and Manawatū in 2020 to fix damage made to properties by the tenant or occupants?*
4. *How many work orders were issued for Kainga Ora properties in Palmerston North and Manawatū in 2020 to have repairs made after damage has been done by tenants or occupants?*
5. *In the past 12 months, how many occupants or tenants have been made to repay Kainga Ora for damage made to their homes in Palmerston North or Manawatū? And to what amount?*

As a responsible landlord, Kāinga Ora is committed to fixing and repairing damages reported to ensure that its customers have good living conditions. When damage occurs to Kāinga Ora properties, the first priority is to repair it as quickly as possible, to maintain the stock of available properties and ensure good living conditions for customers. The best way to ensure that repairs are done promptly is to manage them at the local level. Accordingly, Kāinga Ora does not centrally record information about 'who' is/was liable for damages to its properties.

We record data relating to charging tenants for damage they accept they have caused. However, this data can include damage done by third parties, including vandalised vacant properties, as well as general maintenance costs.

In response to questions one and three of your request respectively, and bearing in mind the system constraints described above, I can advise the following:

- For the 12 months from March 2021 to February 2022, Kāinga Ora recorded that 219 customers in the Manawatū and Palmerston North Territorial Local Authority (TLAs) were charged a total cost of \$129,704 for repairs.
- For the period January 2020 to December 2020, 360 customers in the Manawatū and Palmerston North TLAs have been charged a total cost of \$186,059 for repairs.

Where repairs or maintenance are needed, a work order is raised for that property that details the work to be done. The work order can cover a number of different jobs in different categories. A completed work order therefore includes all repairs that are undertaken some of which may

subsequently be charged as damage. The detailed information on what makes up the damage that is charged is kept on tenant's files.

I am therefore unable to provide you with the number of completed work orders as it is held in individual tenant files. In order to provide you with this information, Kāinga Ora staff would have to manually review hundreds of files. As such, I refuse questions two and four of your request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

Identifying liability for damage is not always as straightforward as it may seem. Under the Residential Tenancies Act 1986, a tenant is liable for damage if the damage was intentional or careless, rather than accidental. In practice, it is not always easy to determine whether damage is accidental or due to carelessness. Furthermore, under our wellbeing approach to tenancy services, there are some situations where it may not be appropriate to pass the cost of damages to the tenant. For example, where there are social issues like family violence, drug and/or alcohol dependency or other severe stresses within the household.

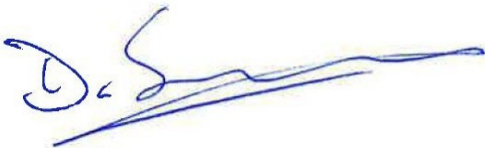
The answer to part one of question five of your request is provided in response to question one.

Concerning the second part of question five, most of the money we recover is repaid in weekly or fortnightly sums. To be able to provide you with this information would require an investigation into individual tenant files to find recovered amounts. Over the past few years, Kāinga Ora has written off historical damage debt that tenants have not repaid. We record this written off debt as repaid which makes it difficult to determine the total amount of debt that has been paid rather than written off. I am therefore refusing part two of question five of the request under section 18(f) of the Act because *'the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research'*. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this response. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or Freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that Kāinga Ora proactively releases our 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 noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Soughtton', with a horizontal line underneath.

Daniel Soughtton  
**Deputy Chief Executive - Central**