

26 November 2024

s 9(2)(a)

I write in response to your request dated 30 October 2024, for information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

*How many vacant sites are there around the country?*

*How much money is being spent on security on those?*

Information regarding the first part of your request can be found on our website at: <https://kaingaora.govt.nz/en/NZ/publications/oia-and-proactive-releases/housing-statistics/>. I am therefore refusing the first part of your request under section 18(d) of the Act as the information requested is publicly available.

Each quarter, Kāinga Ora publishes three sets of information for our managed stock, vacant properties and homes removed from service. It is important to note the two categories in the dataset published online which concern our vacant stock. The first is vacant homes, which includes homes being made available to re-tenant. As at the end of October 2024, the turnaround time from homes being vacant to ready to let is 18.8 days, and across our portfolio of over 75,000 homes 97.8 percent are tenanted.

In the month of June 2024, Kāinga Ora delivered over 1,500 homes, which required a significant focus on ensuring tenants are placed as soon as possible into these new homes. As of September 2024, our vacant stock decreased from 2,189 to 1,392 homes, as many of these new homes were tenanted.

The remaining 1,392 homes are either coming into service (homes that may require final completion works or may be part of a larger project where they cannot be tenanted until work on the wider site is complete for health and safety reasons), ready to let (homes that are in the process of being matched to a suitable tenant), under repair or pending a decision on their best future use.

The second category is homes removed from service, which includes:

- homes that have been removed, or in the process of being removed, so the site can be redeveloped.
- homes that are undergoing major repairs.
- homes have significant retrofit work underway, or are being used as temporary accommodation for people whose homes are being retrofitted.
- homes where the lease is due to expire, and properties to be sold.

The number of homes in this category has decreased from 2,017 in June 2024 to 1,820 in September 2024. A number of these properties were earmarked for renewal or redevelopment but

are now under assessment as Kāinga Ora looks to get best value for money from its projects so it can deliver social housing in the areas where it is most needed, as outlined in our updated Letter of Expectations. The assessment process involves looking at:

- The locations where Kāinga Ora is trying to deliver more homes, or where renewal of older homes is a high priority.
- The costs and plans of the proposed projects and checking they still stack up financially and that there are not better options for using the site.

In situations where a Kāinga Ora property is likely to remain unoccupied for some time and there is a risk of people gaining illegal access, we put in place sensible security measures to protect our property and the local community. It is the right thing for Kāinga Ora to do as a responsible property owner and landlord. The security measures will vary at each site, depending on the nature of the risks and the type of property.

In response to the second part of your request, Kāinga Ora does not centrally record information relating to security costs in a manner that is easily accessible within the given timeframe, and it would take substantial collation to do so. This is because there are different kinds of security provided and we would need to check each vacant site individually to collate the information necessary to respond to your second request. I am therefore refusing the second part of your request under section 18(f) of the Act as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

If you have an interest in specific Kāinga Ora sites that are vacant, we can endeavour to provide specific security-related information pertaining to those specific sites.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. There is Information about how to make a complaint at <https://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz> or by freephone on 0800 802 602.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Gareth Stiven

**General Manager – Strategy, Finance and Policy**