



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA



Ministry of Social Development
Benefit Fact Sheets
Snapshot - September 2021 Quarter

The Benefit Fact Sheets provide a high-level view of trends in benefit receipt. The Benefit Fact Sheets are published quarterly and contain information on income support provided by the Ministry.

In the Benefit Fact Sheets Snapshot

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Protecting our clients information – confidentiality

All information in this document has been randomly rounded to base 3. Data found here is rounded independently from other products produced by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) resulting in small differences in the data between products.

From 12 February 2021, MSD is applying a range of new confidentiality procedures to public data releases. These will continue to protect client information, while making more data available. To find out how we have changed the way we work with client information visit:

<https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/tools/how-we-keep-data-private.html>

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Main benefit assistance

Main benefits

Main benefits for working age (18–64 years) clients include: Jobseeker Support (JS), Sole Parent Support (SPS), Supported Living Payment (SLP), Youth Payment and Young Parent Payment (YP/YPP), Emergency Benefit (EB), Emergency Maintenance Allowance (EMA), Jobseeker Support Student Hardship (JSSH), Widow’s Benefit Overseas (WBO), and Sole Parent Support Overseas (SPSO).

Figure 1a. Number of working-age clients receiving main benefits at the end of the last six September quarters

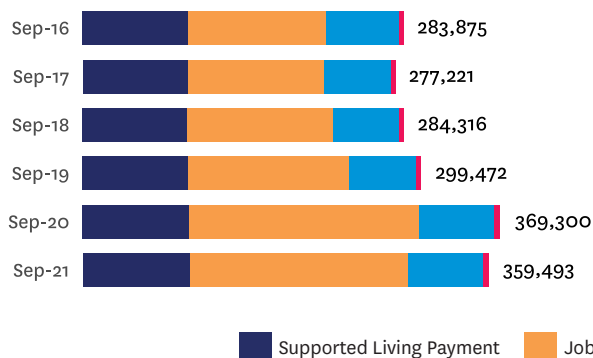
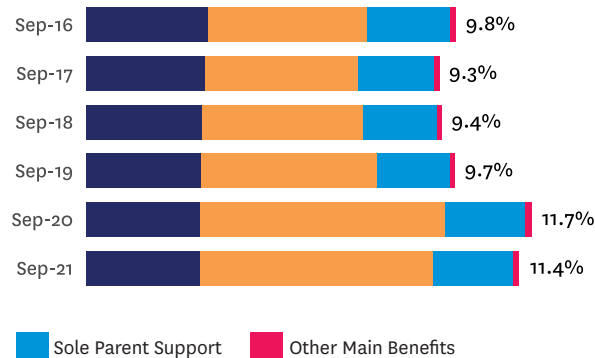


Figure 1b. Proportion of working-age population receiving main benefits at the end of the last six September quarters



359,493 working-age people receiving a main benefit as at the end of September 2021

11.4 percent of the working-age population receiving a main benefit as at the end of September 2021

The number of working-age people receiving a main benefit, as at the end of September 2021, was **2.7 percent lower** when compared to the September 2020 quarter. **Benefit numbers as a proportion of the working-age population decreased to 11.4 percent** from 11.7 percent as at the end of September 2020.

The working-age population is a subset of the estimated New Zealand resident population, defined as those aged 18–64. To calculate population proportions, the working-age population is used, as at the most recent June estimate available.

Jobseeker Support (JS)

Figure 2a. Number of working-age people receiving Jobseeker Support by sub category, at the end of the last six September quarters

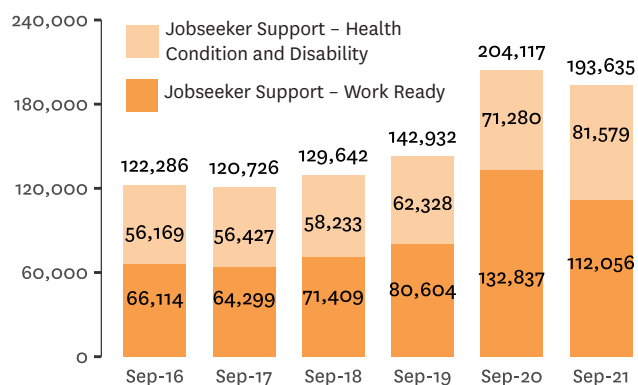
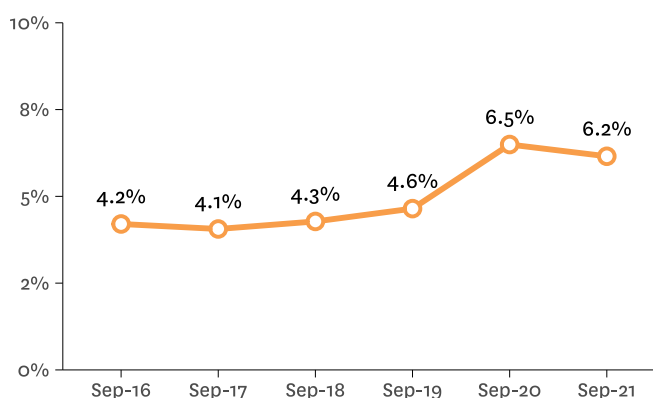


Figure 2b. Proportion of working-age population receiving Jobseeker Support, at the end of the last six September quarters



193,635 working-age people receiving Jobseeker Support as at the end of September 2021

6.2 percent of the working-age population receiving Jobseeker Support as at the end of September 2021

As at the end of September 2021, the number of working-age people on **Jobseeker Support decreased by 5.1 percent**, when compared to the September 2020 quarter. **Most of this decrease came from Jobseeker Support – Work Ready**, which decreased by 15.6 percent when comparing the end of September 2020 (132,837) to September 2021 (112,056).

Jobseeker Support is for people who are actively looking for or preparing for work. It includes people with part-time work obligations and those who cannot look for work at the moment (e.g. those with a health condition, injury, or disability).

Sole Parent Support (SPS)

Figure 3a. Number of working-age people receiving Sole Parent Support at the end of the last six September quarters

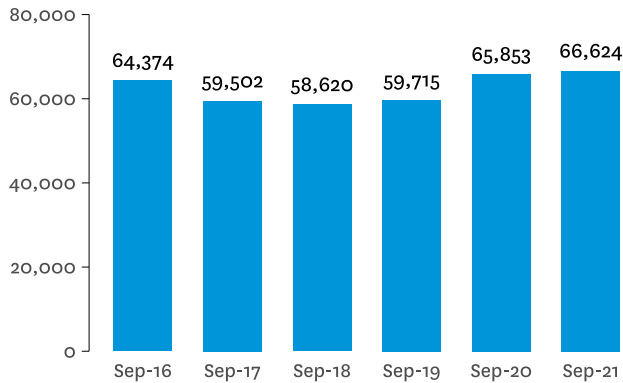
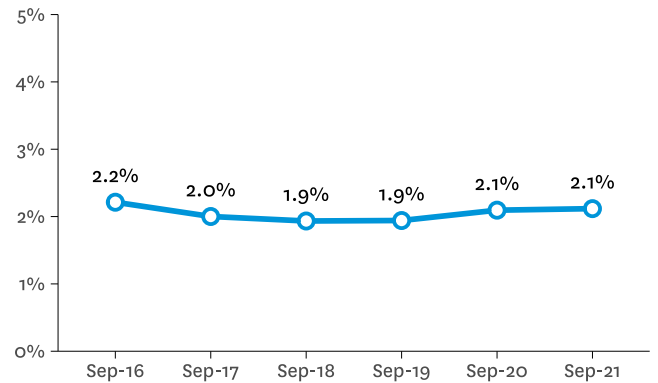


Figure 3b. Proportion of working-age population receiving Sole Parent Support at the end of the last six September quarters



66,624 working-age people receiving Sole Parent Support as at the end of September 2021

2.1 percent of the working-age population receiving Sole Parent Support as at the end of September 2021

As at the end of September 2021, **the number of working-age people on Sole Parent Support increased by 1.2 percent**, when compared to the September 2020 quarter. **The proportion of working-age people receiving SPS remained steady at 2.1 percent** as at the end of September 2021.

Sole Parent Support is for single parents, with at least one dependent child under 14 years.

Supported Living Payment (SLP)

Figure 4a. Number of working-age people receiving Supported Living Payment at the end of the last six September quarters

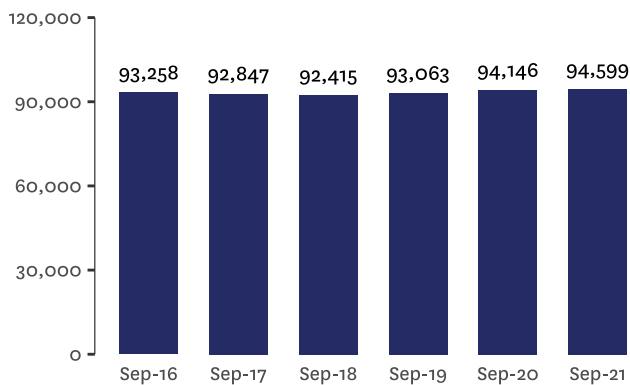
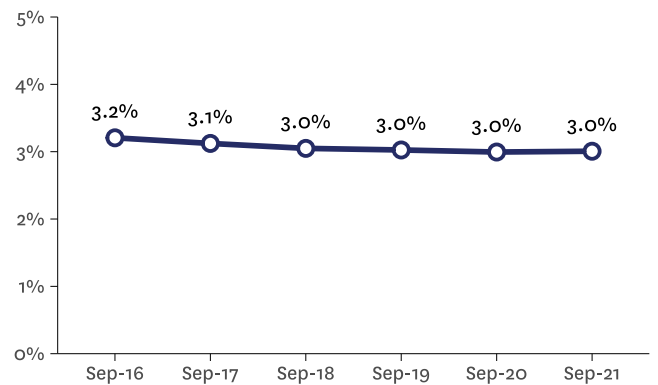


Figure 4b. Proportion of working-age population receiving Supported Living Payment at the end of the last six September quarters



94,599 working-age people receiving Supported Living Payment as at the end of September 2021

3.0 percent of the working-age population receiving Supported Living Payment as at the end of September 2021

As at the end of September 2021, **the number of working-age people on Supported Living Payment increased by 0.5 percent**, when compared to the September 2020 quarter. **The proportion of working-age people receiving SLP remained steady at 3.0 percent** as at the end of September 2021.

Supported Living Payment is for people who have, or care for someone with, a health condition, injury or disability that limits their ability to work. The long-term nature of conditions for people on Supported Living Payment mean that fewer people transfer to other benefits or move into paid employment, compared to other benefit types.

Regional distribution of Jobseeker Support as a proportion of the working-age population, by Work and Income region, as at September 2021

The proportion of the working-age population* receiving Jobseeker Support decreased in all regions. Northland had the highest proportion receiving Jobseeker Support at 10.6 percent, as at the end of September 2021.

Comparing end of September 2021 with September 2020, the largest percentage point decreases were seen in East Coast (0.8 percent), Central (0.7 percent), and Taranaki (0.7 percent).

Work and Income has 11 geographical regions. An extra category, "Other Region", is used to count people managed by national units, for example contact centres and processing centres.

All percentages have been rounded to the nearest decimal point. As a result, a percentage point change may be displayed as zero.

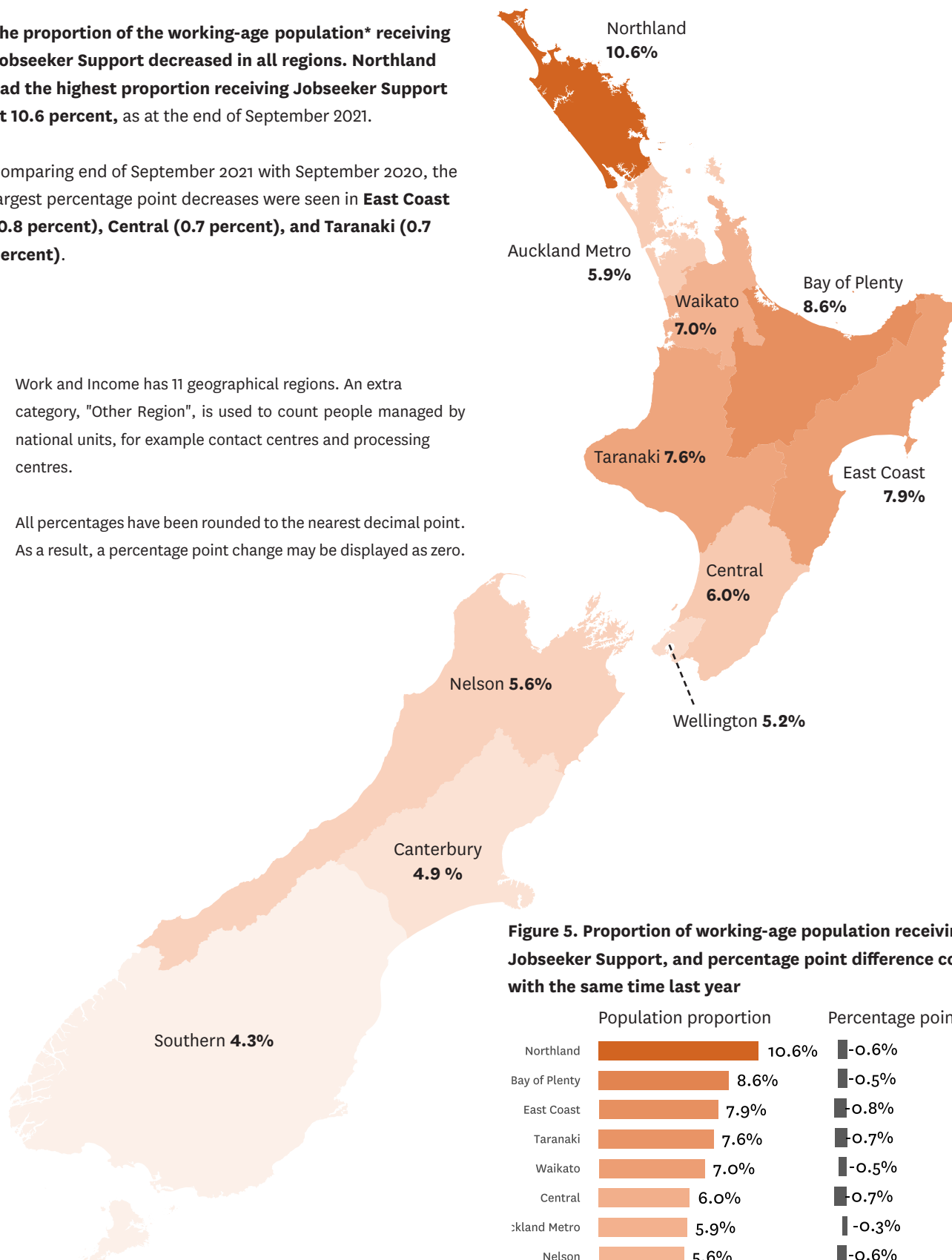


Figure 5. Proportion of working-age population receiving Jobseeker Support, and percentage point difference compared with the same time last year

Region	Population proportion	Percentage point change
Northland	10.6%	-0.6%
Bay of Plenty	8.6%	-0.5%
East Coast	7.9%	-0.8%
Taranaki	7.6%	-0.7%
Waikato	7.0%	-0.5%
Central	6.0%	-0.7%
Auckland Metro	5.9%	-0.3%
Nelson	5.6%	-0.6%
Wellington	5.2%	-0.4%
Canterbury	4.9%	-0.4%
Southern	4.3%	-0.6%

* The regional estimated working-age population figures used on pages three and four of this report have been calculated using Statistics New Zealand's revised regional population estimates as at June 2020.

Regional distribution of Sole Parent Support as a proportion of the working-age population, by Work and Income region, as at September 2021

The proportion of the working-age population receiving Sole Parent Support remained the same in most regions. Northland had the highest proportion at 3.7 percent, as at the end of September 2021.

All regions had no or only small changes, when compared to September 2020.

Work and Income has 11 geographical regions. An extra category, "Other Region" is used to count people managed by national units, for example contact centres and processing centres.

All percentages have been rounded to the nearest decimal point. As a result, a percentage point change may be displayed as zero.

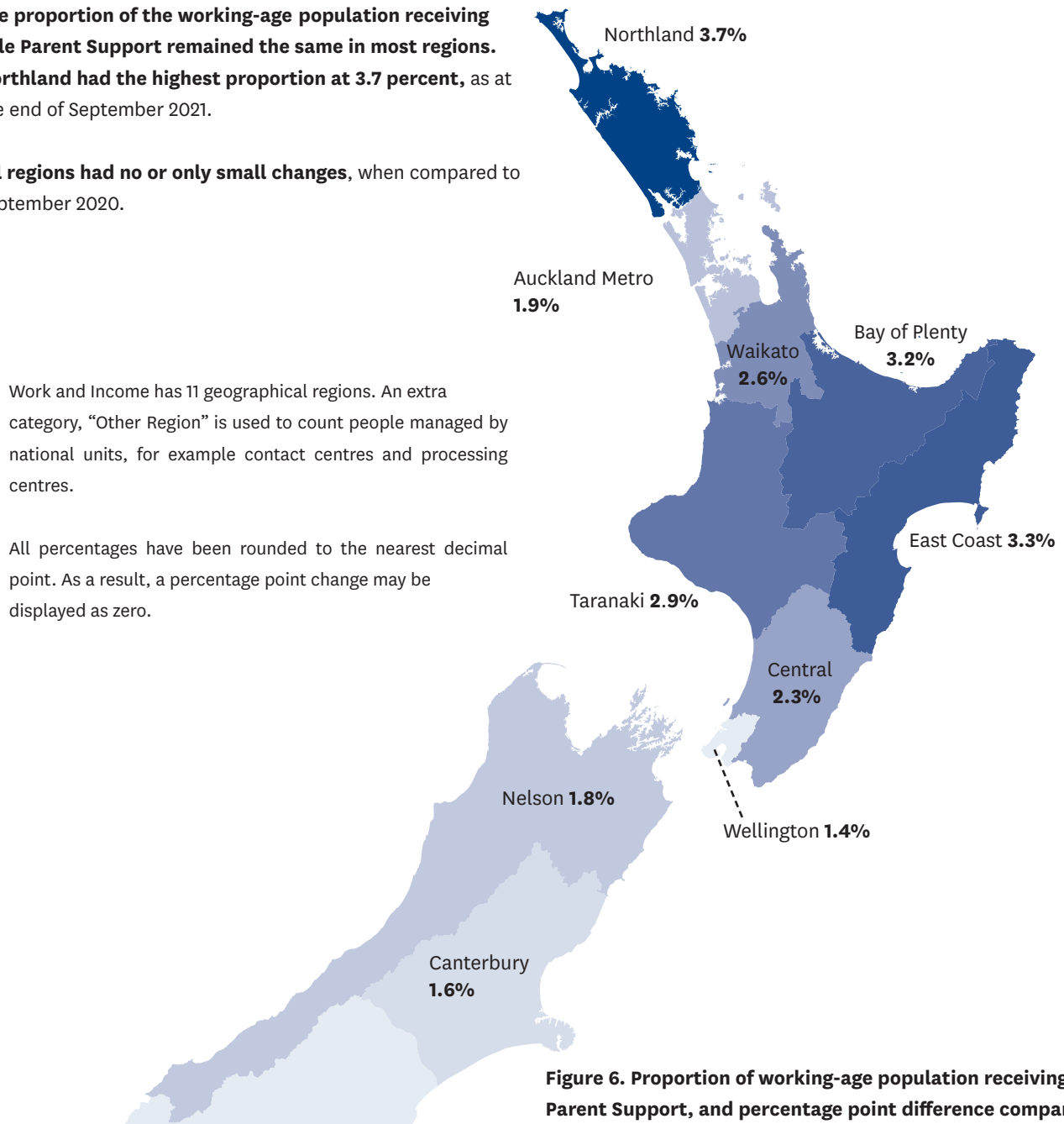


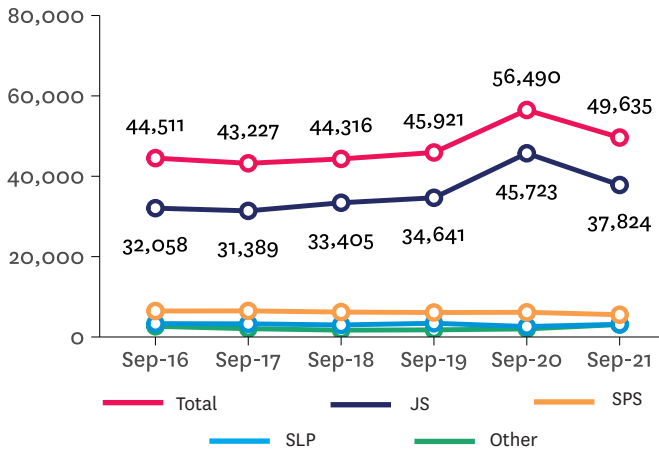
Figure 6. Proportion of working-age population receiving Sole Parent Support, and percentage point difference compared with the same time last year

	Population proportion	Percentage point change
Northland	3.7%	-0.1%
East Coast	3.3%	-0.1%
Bay of Plenty	3.2%	0.1%
Taranaki	2.9%	0.0%
Waikato	2.6%	0.0%
Central	2.3%	0.0%
Auckland Metro	1.9%	0.0%
Nelson	1.8%	0.0%
Canterbury	1.6%	0.0%
Southern	1.4%	0.0%
Wellington	1.4%	-0.1%

Benefit grants and cancellations

Benefit grants

Figure 7. Number of benefits granted during the last six September quarters



The total number of benefits granted during the September 2021 quarter decreased by 6,855 when compared with the September 2020 quarter, or a decrease of 12.1 percent.

There were 37,824 benefit grants for Jobseeker Support (JS) during the September 2021 quarter, a decrease of 7,899 when compared with the September 2020 quarter.

A benefit grant is the formal acceptance of entitlement to a benefit. The numbers reported here are for main benefits granted during the September quarter, for the last six September quarters (i.e. 1 July to 30 September).

Benefit cancellations

Figure 8a. Number of cancellations by benefit during the last six September quarters

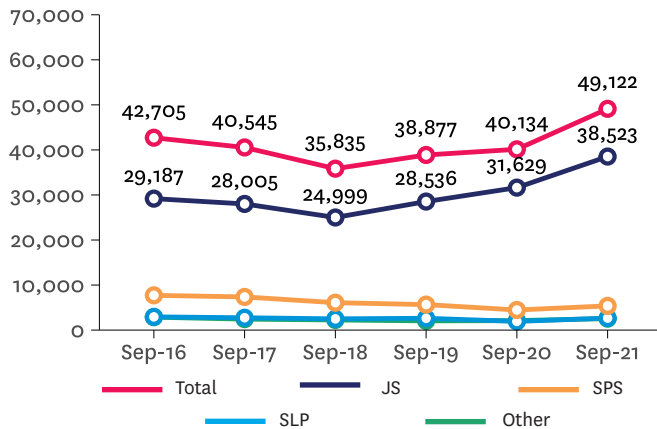
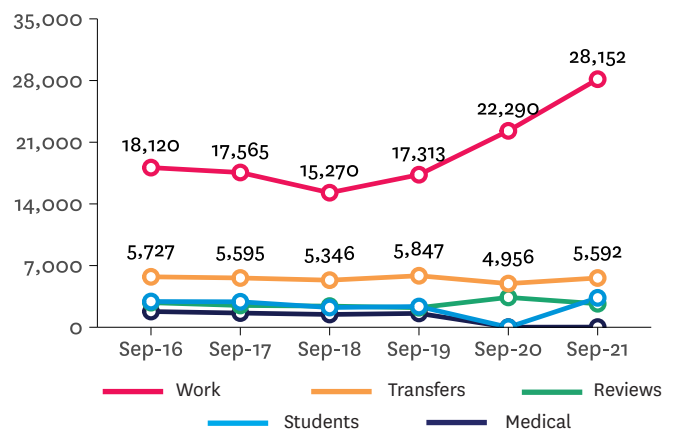


Figure 8b. Number of cancellations by selected reason during the last six September quarters



49,122 benefit cancellations during the September 2021 quarter

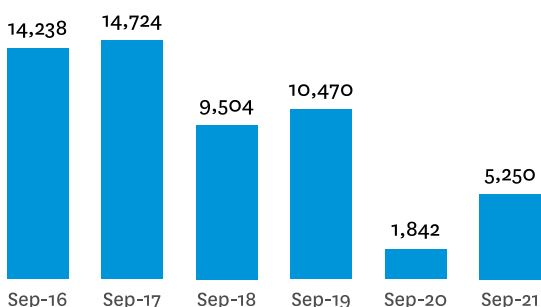
The number of benefit cancellations during the September 2021 quarter increased by 8,988 when compared to the September 2020 quarter, or an increase of 22.4 percent. Obtaining work, a main reason for benefit cancellations, increased by 26.3 percent when compared to the September 2020 quarter.

28,152 benefit cancellations during the September 2021 quarter due to obtaining work

A cancellation (cancel) is the formal process that ends the entitlement to a benefit. The numbers reported above are for benefits cancelled within the September quarter, for the last six September quarters (i.e. 1 July to 30 September).

Benefit sanctions

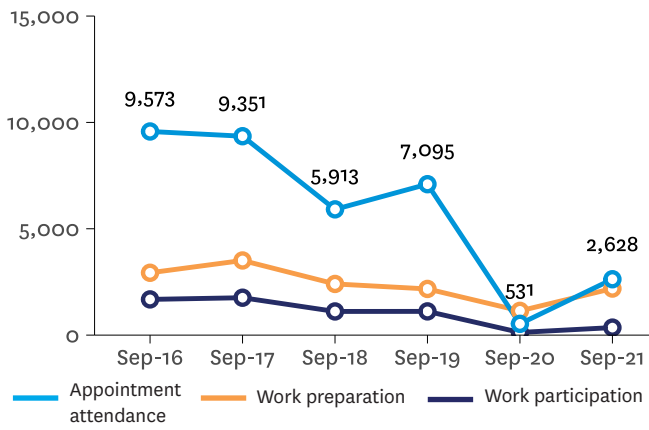
Figure 9. Number of sanctions for unfulfilled work obligations during the last six September quarters



The number of sanctions issued during the September 2021 quarter was 5,250. Between 23 March 2020 and 27 May 2020, work related obligation failures were suspended, they restarted back in late June 2020 and have been increasing quarter on quarter since then.

A sanction is a reduction in a person's benefit that may occur if they do not fulfil their work obligations. Sanctions can affect benefit recipients in a number of ways, depending on their circumstances and the number of times they have had a sanction over the last 12 months. There are three types of sanctions: graduated (i.e. percentage reduction in benefit amount), suspended, or cancelled.

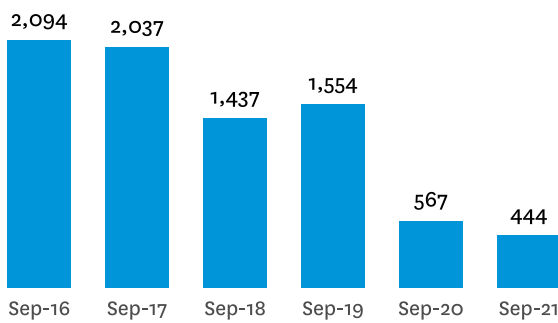
Figure 10. Number of sanctions for unfulfilled work obligations, by reason, during the last six September quarters



The main reason for sanctions was due to clients not attending appointments (including seminar appointments), with 2,628 recipients of a main benefit having unfulfilled work obligations due to this reason during the September 2021 quarter.

The maximum main benefit reduction for sole parents and couples with dependent children is 50 percent, when sanctioned within a 12-month period. For people without a de facto partner or couples with no dependent children, the first sanction is a maximum 50 percent reduction of their main benefit; for a second non-fulfilment of an obligation, they face a 100 percent suspension of their main benefit; and a third sanction will then result in a cancellation of their benefit.

Figure 11. Number of graduated sanctions active at the end of the last six September quarters

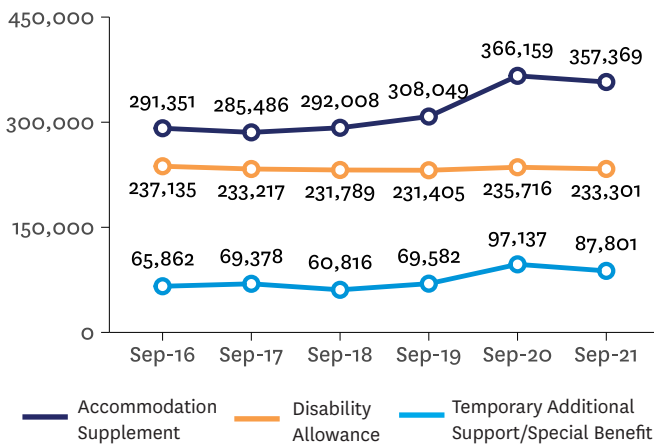


As at the end of September 2021, there were 444 graduated sanctions actively in place (i.e. when a client has a percentage reduction in their weekly benefit rate).

Not everyone who does not fulfil their obligations gets sanctioned; if benefit recipients re-comply or provide additional information, the sanction can be overturned.

Supplementary assistance

Figure 12. Number of recipients of supplementary assistance at the end of the last six September quarters



The number of people receiving **Accommodation Supplement** in the September 2021 quarter **decreased by 8,790** when compared to the September 2020 quarter.

The number of people receiving **Temporary Additional Support/Special Benefit** in the September 2021 quarter **decreased by 9,336** when compared to the September 2020 quarter.

The number of people receiving **Disability Allowance** in the September 2021 quarter **decreased by 2,415** when compared to the September 2020 quarter.

The Accommodation Supplement is a weekly payment to assist people on low incomes with their rent, board, or the cost of owning a home, but not available to those in public housing or charged Income-Related Rent. Changes in the number of people receiving an Accommodation Supplement tend to follow similar changes in benefit numbers.

The Disability Allowance is a weekly payment to assist people who have on-going costs because of a disability. A person does not need to be receiving a main benefit in order to qualify for the Disability Allowance. Changes in the number of people receiving a Disability Allowance tends to follow similar changes in benefit and New Zealand Superannuation numbers.

Temporary Additional Support is a weekly payment that helps people to cover essential living costs that cannot be met from their income or other resources. A person does not have to be receiving a main benefit to qualify for Temporary Additional Support. Temporary Additional Support replaced Special Benefit in 2006, however some people are still entitled to receive Special Benefit, therefore these are counted together.

Hardship assistance

A total of **572,223 hardship assistance payments, worth \$200,296,802** were provided during the September 2021 quarter. These figures are lower than the hardship assistance provided during the September 2020 quarter, when there were 604,425 hardship assistance payments worth \$215,545,216.

Hardship assistance includes, but is not limited to: Special Needs Grants (SNGs), Benefit Advances (ADVs) and Recoverable Assistance Payments (RAPs). These forms of assistance are designed to help people who have immediate needs. The numbers reported for hardship assistance are those provided within the September quarter (i.e. 1 July to 30 September). Hardship assistance data is not limited to the working-age population (i.e. 18 to 64 years).

Total hardship assistance

Figure 13a. Number of hardship payments provided during the quarter for the last six September quarters, by type of assistance

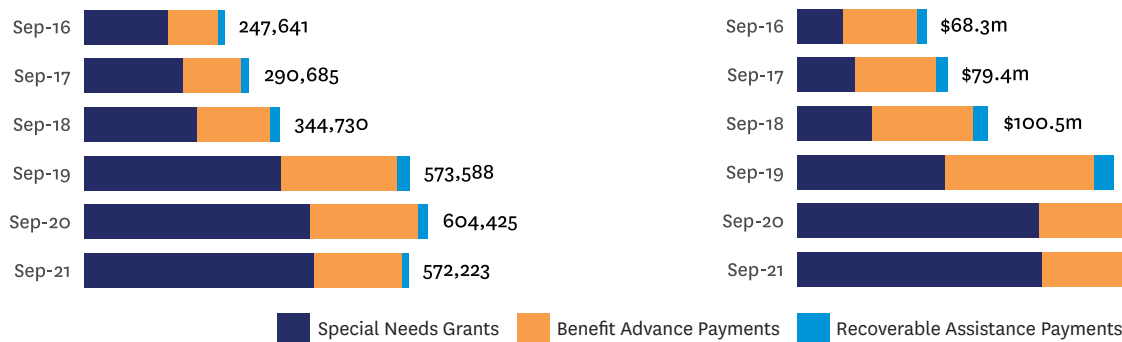
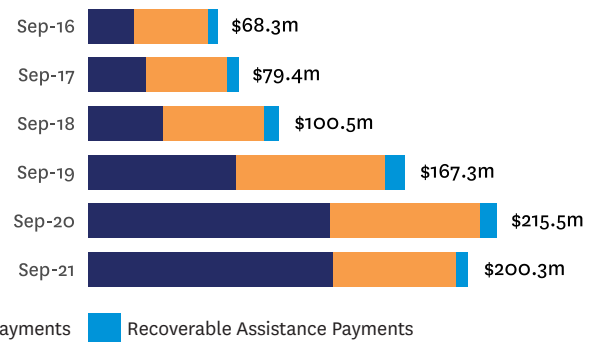


Figure 13b. Value of hardship payments provided during the quarter for the last six September quarters, by type of assistance



572,223 hardship payments provided during the September 2021 quarter

\$200,296,802 is the value of hardship payments provided during the September 2021 quarter

Reasons for hardship assistance, detailed below include the reasons for both Benefit Advances and Special Needs Grants. The Accommodation-related reasons are for Benefit Advances only. Food grants, Medical-associated costs, and Emergency Housing reasons are for Special Needs Grants.

Reasons for granting hardship assistance

Figure 14a. Number of hardship payments provided during the quarter for the last six September quarters, by selected reason

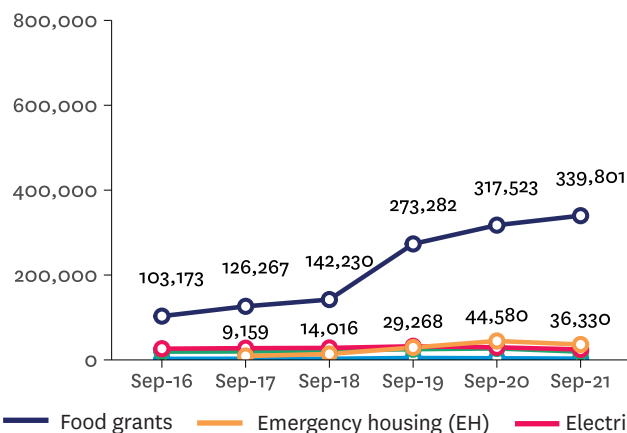
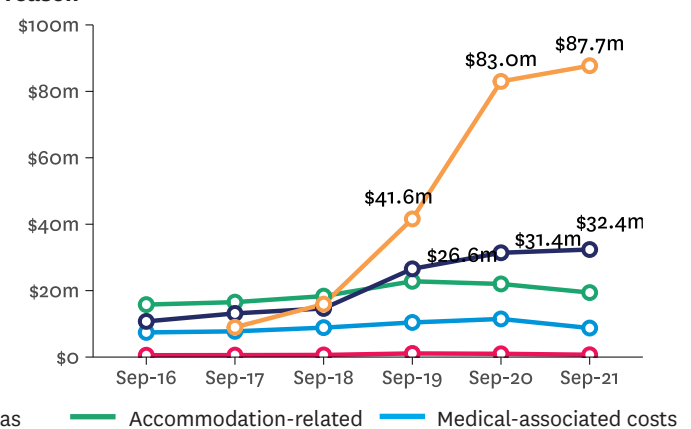


Figure 14b. Value of hardship payments provided during the quarter for the last six September quarters, by selected reason

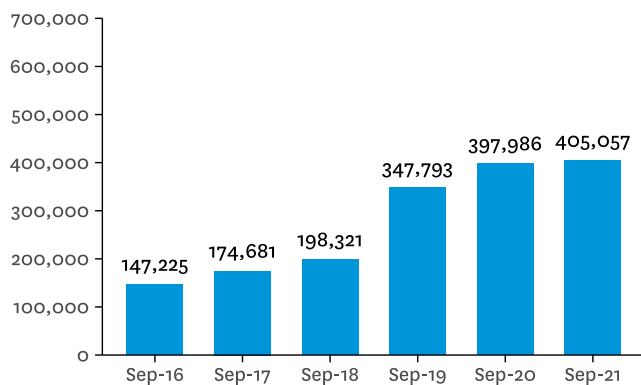


The number of Special Needs Grants (SNGs) for food has increased since the September 2020 quarter. Comparing September 2020 quarter with September 2021 quarter, there was a 22,278 increase in the number of food SNGs provided, totalling 339,801 during the September 2021 quarter. As a result, the value of SNGs for food grants provided increased to \$32,376,550 during the September 2021 quarter.

The number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (EH SNGs) during the September 2021 quarter decreased when compared with the same period last year. There were 8,250 fewer EH SNGs provided, totalling 36,330 during the September 2021 quarter.

Special Needs Grants (SNGs)

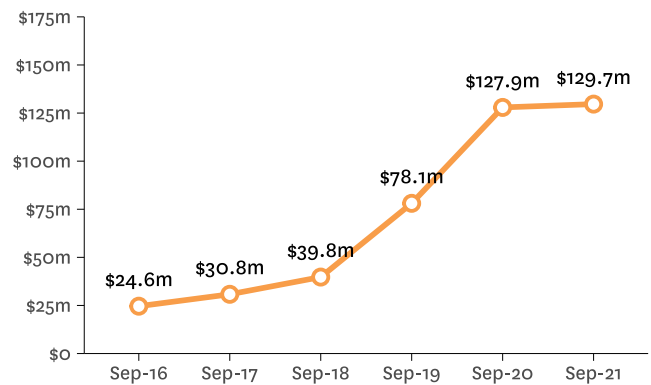
Figure 15a. Number of Special Needs Grants provided during the quarter, for the last six September quarters



405,057 Special Needs Grants provided during the September 2021 quarter

\$129,654,488 is the value of Special Needs Grants provided in the September 2021 quarter

Figure 15b. Value of Special Needs Grants provided during the quarter, for the last six September quarters

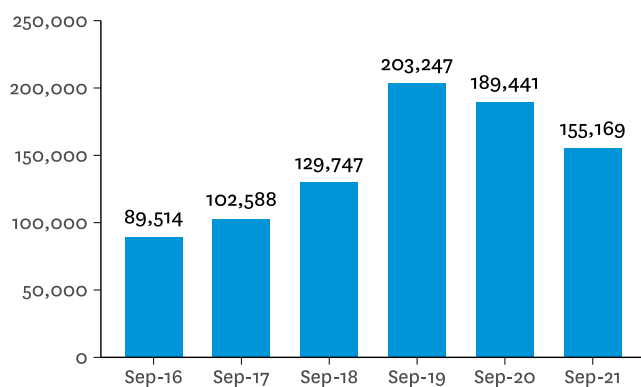


The number of Special Needs Grants provided was **7,071** higher during the **September 2021** quarter when compared to the same period in 2020. The value of grants provided increased from \$127,926,543 during the September 2020 quarter to \$129,654,488 during the September 2021 quarter.

A Special Needs Grant provides a non-taxable, one-off recoverable or non-recoverable payment to help people meet immediate needs. A person does not need to be receiving a main benefit to be eligible for a Special Needs Grant. Special Needs Grants include Emergency Housing.

Benefit Advances (ADVs)

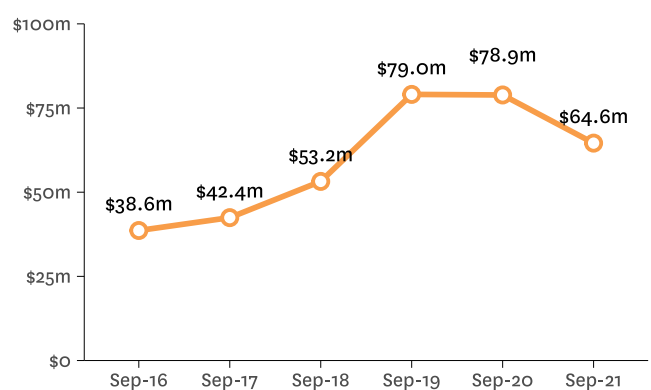
Figure 16a. Number of Benefit Advances provided during the quarter, for the last six September quarters



155,169 Benefit Advances provided during the September 2021 quarter

\$64,575,294 is the value of Benefit Advances provided during the September 2021 quarter

Figure 16b. Value of Benefit Advances provided during the quarter, for the last six September quarters



The number of Benefit Advances provided was **34,272** fewer during the **September 2021** quarter, compared with the September 2020 quarter. This has resulted in the value of Benefit Advances provided decreasing by \$14,301,033 to a total of \$64,575,294.

Anyone receiving a main benefit who requires assistance to meet an immediate essential need can have access to a Benefit Advance. The advance can be up to six weeks of their net entitlement, and is recovered from subsequent payments of benefit. People not receiving a main benefit may receive Recoverable Assistance Payments.