




14 January 2021



Tēnā koe 

Thank you for your email of 22 October 2020 to the Ministry of Education requesting the following information:

1. *Copies of all documents generated, sent or received in regard to the Urgent Response Fund. Responding to the impact of the COVID-19 lockdowns on children and young people Schools, kura and early learning services. Specifically, what initiatives have been applied for and approved or rejected*

On 5 November 2020 you agreed to a clarified request for the following information:

1. *'Copies of all reports, and briefing notes provided to the Minister relating to the Urgent Response Fund.'*
2. *'The number of online URF applications that have been; approved, are currently being considered, and declined by organisation type, recipient learner type (e.g. a student or a whole classroom) category of need, and funding amount.'*

I apologise for the delay in responding to the first stage of your request. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

The Urgent Response Fund (URF) provides \$50 million in 2020/21 to support children and young people's attendance, re-engagement with learning and wellbeing after the COVID-19 lockdowns.

The Ministry has used the Equity Index to allocate the URF funding to regions. The Equity Index targets funding to regions with relatively higher levels of disadvantage, where the impact of COVID 19 on well-being, attendance, and engagement will be most significant. The regional Directors of Education approve applications, working with regional groups, to ensure that local knowledge and priorities inform funding decisions. As at 28 October 2020, \$23 million of the URF had been distributed to schools, kura and early learning services me ngā kōhanga reo.

As advised in our letter of 20 November 2020, we are responding to your request in stages with this response addressing the first part of your request for reports and briefing notes provided to the Minister. The Ministry has provided two Education Reports and three Briefing Notes to the Minister on the URF. These are outlined, together with our decision on their release, in **Appendix A** which is attached to this response.

The two Education Reports have already been proactively released on our website. As such, I am refusing those papers under section 18(d) of the Act, as they are publicly available. A weblink to the papers has been provided to you within **Appendix A**.

For the three Briefing Notes, I am releasing these to you in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of individuals. This information primarily consists of mobile phone numbers of Ministry staff at the beginning of each document. While the November briefing report is technically out of scope, I am releasing it to you in the interest of transparency and openness.

Since the provision of the September Briefing Note to the Minister (document 1), a number of regional group memberships have changed. These lists should not be viewed as an account of what is currently happening, but an accurate reflection of what was happening at the time. The names of individuals who are no longer members of the regional groups have been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect their privacy. While I have identified no public interest considerations sufficient to outweigh the need to withhold this information, I acknowledge the public interest in knowing how the Ministry developed these groups and their representation. I am therefore releasing the individuals' titles and which institutions they represented.

You should expect the final stage of your response on or before 18 January 2020, as advised in our extension letter of 20 November 2020.

Please note, the Ministry now proactively publishes responses provided under the Act on our website. As such, we may publish this response on our website after five working days. Your name and contact details will be removed.

Thank you again for your email. You have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review this decision. You can do this by writing to [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz) or Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Nāku noa, nā



Jann Marshall  
**Acting Deputy Secretary**  
**Sector Enablement and Support**