



18 March 2021

[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 19 February 2021 to the Ministry of Education requesting the following information in relation to the rollout of free period products across schools throughout New Zealand:

1. *The total cost of the initiative*
2. *Where are the products being sourced from?*
3. *Who is procuring the products?*
4. *What is the estimated number of units that will be supplied to schools?*

Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

As you may know, the initiative began as a phased approach to introduce period products in schools and kura. To start, fifteen schools and kura from the Waikato region were selected to take part in a trial phase, providing free period products for up to 3,200 young people. The Ministry worked with a small group of schools and young people to start with to understand more about their diverse experiences and the barriers they face, and to ensure that the products and the way they are provided, meet their needs.

On 18 February 2021, the Government announced that this initiative would be offered to all state and state-integrated schools and kura. The Ministry will begin its tendering process for the expansion in March 2021. Schools and kura that opt-in by 31 March 2021 will be provided with products toward the end of Term 2.

It is expected that this initiative will:

- reduce barriers to access and improve school attendance and sports involvement,
- improve child and youth wellbeing,
- reduce financial strain on families and whānau experiencing poverty/material hardship, and
- promote positive gender norms and reduce stigmatisation of menstruation.

Phase one invested \$2.592 million to cover the provision and continued supply of products in the Waikato to the end of Term 2, 2021, and to support the first phase of the nationwide roll-out. Cabinet has allocated further funding for this initiative through to June 2024. However, as the Ministry is going to tender for the supply and distribution of period products, I am withholding the exact figure under section 9(2)(j) of the Act to enable the Ministry to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial negotiations.

As the tendering process is yet to begin, we are not able to say where the products are being sourced, who is procuring them, and the estimated number of period products that will be

needed. I am therefore refusing these parts of your request under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information does not exist.

The Ministry has released a large amount of information on this initiative. You can find these extra resources and information at the following link:

<https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/overall-strategies-and-policies/wellbeing-in-education/access-to-free-period-products/>

Please note, the Ministry now proactively publishes responses 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 or Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Nāku noa, nā



Katrina Casey
Deputy Secretary
Sector Enablement and Support