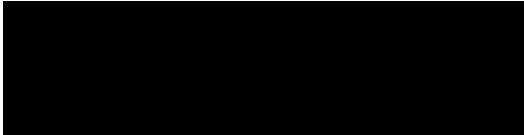




11 May 2020



Dear 

Thank you for your email of 19 February 2020 to the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) requesting information about taxpayer funded trips for Ministry of Education staff.

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

Set out below are the responses to the seven parts of your request.

*How much has the Ministry of Education spent a year since 2018 on taxpayer funded trips for all staff? This includes flights and accommodation.*

We are refusing this part of the request under section 18(d) of the Act as details of the information requested are publicly available in the Ministry's Annual Reviews for 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 at the following link:

[https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/submissions-and-advice/document/52SCEW\\_EVI\\_82560\\_4885/ministry-of-education-responses-to-written-questions-1-131](https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/submissions-and-advice/document/52SCEW_EVI_82560_4885/ministry-of-education-responses-to-written-questions-1-131)

[https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/submissions-and-advice/document/52SCEW\\_EVI\\_92744\\_EW6801/ministry-of-education-responses-to-written-questions-1-120](https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/submissions-and-advice/document/52SCEW_EVI_92744_EW6801/ministry-of-education-responses-to-written-questions-1-120)

*What is the budget for the Ministry of Education in terms of funding trips and holidays?*

The Ministry's 2019/2020 travel budget is \$5.9 million. This figure includes Domestic Travel/Accommodation and other expenses; International Travel/Accommodation and other expenses; and Australia/Pacific Islands Travel/Accommodation and other expenses.

Ministry staff travel for a large variety of reasons in order to do their work and progress the Education Work Programme. The Ministry does fund that travel. It does not fund staff holidays.

*What were the reasons behind the trips for each staff member at the Ministry of Education in the last two years?*

The exercise involved to provide detailed reasons for each staff member who has travelled for work over the last two years would be substantial and significantly interfere with the operations of the Ministry.

As such, we are refusing this part of the request under section 18(f) of the Act on the basis that the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

*What did staff members do during these trips?*

Ministry staff travel for a wide variety of reasons in order to do their work and progress the Education Work Programme. Around 75% of Ministry staff support children and young people, educators and/or education services on the frontline. Staff travel is required to lead and maintain that support and engagement with teachers, whānau, tamariki, rangatahi, community leaders and employers.

Some Ministry officials also travel internationally to attend conferences such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC.) Learning from good practice and international engagement with partner countries that are developing innovative approaches, sharing successes and learning from challenges others are also facing is a critical component of the education system reform.

*How long each staff member was away for?*

The exercise involved to calculate how long each staff member was away would be substantial and significantly interfere with the operations of the Ministry.

As such, we are refusing this part of the request under section 18(f) of the Act on the basis that the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

*The amount of trips including flights and accommodation cancelled over the last 2 years.*

Set out below are details of the number of trips cancelled for the years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 and the year to date number for 2019/2020.

<b>Financial year</b>	<b>Cancellations – Air/land travel and accommodation</b>
17/18	348
18/19	623
19/20 (YTD)	388

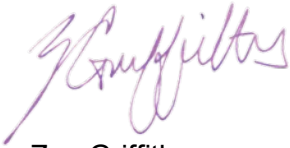
*How much each trip that was cancelled cost, including flights and accommodation over the last 2 years.*

The below table outlines the cancellation fees for the past two financial years and for the 2019/2020 year to date. This includes air and land travel as well as accommodation. A large proportion of the cancellation fees below will be recovered through deferring/re-scheduling travel and credits we receive for future journeys. We are not able to provide the breakdown between recovered/unrecovered costs due to how the data is collected.

Financial year	Cancellation fees prior to rescheduling and credit for future journeys
17/18	\$147,709
18/19	\$258,217
19/20 (YTD)	\$171,595

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.

Yours sincerely



Zoe Griffiths  
**Deputy Secretary**  
**Business Enablement and Support**