MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
TE TĀHUHU O TE MĀTAURANGA

23 MAR 2020

[redacted]

Dear [redacted]

Thank you for your email of 3 February 2020 to the Ministry of Education requesting the following information:

1. *Can you please provide any statistics you have on the numbers and percentages of state primary, intermediate, secondary, area and special schools that have or have had swimming pools over the past 50 years (or as far back as you can go)?*
2. *Can you please provide any statistics you have on the numbers of those schools in each category who were actually operating their swimming pools over that period?*
3. *Can you please clarify the funding provisions for construction and operation of swimming pools and explain how those provisions have changed over the past 50 years?*
4. *If it is true that swimming pools are generally not funded, and that schools have to rely on charity to maintain them as indicated in this press release, can you please explain the rationale for that policy, given the importance of children learning to swim in an island nation like ours?*

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

Our responses to your questions have been answered individually below:

1. Numbers and percentages of state primary, intermediate, secondary, area and special schools that have or have had swimming pools over the past 50 years (or as far back as you can go)?

Please find attached, as **Appendix One**, statistics on all state schools recorded in the Ministry's database as having a pool from 2016 to 2019.

Please note:

- The Ministry does not hold accurate data on school pools dating earlier than April 2016. This is due to a change in our data system that took place around that time.
- The data provided does not include state integrated schools, only state schools, as per your request.
- The data provided is for primary, intermediate, secondary, area/composite and special schools, as per your request. This data does not include schools categorised in our data system as 'other' or 'teen parent unit.'
- Data is an excerpt from the Ministry of Education's property database and is accurate as of 12 February 2020.
- Yearly data is as recorded on 31 December of each year.

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- Boards are able to close pools, temporarily or permanently, without informing the Ministry. This means there may be some variation between the pools actually operating, and the pools recorded in the Ministry's database.

2. Numbers of those schools in each category who were actually operating their swimming pools over that period?

Boards of Trustees are able to make the decision to close pools, temporarily or permanently, without informing the Ministry. This means the Ministry does not hold information on whether pools are 'actually operating.' As such, this part of your request has been refused under 18(g) of the Act.

3. Can you please clarify the funding provisions for construction and operation of swimming pools and explain how those provisions have changed over the past 50 years?

Construction

There is no Ministry funding for the construction of new or replacement swimming pools. A swimming pool is not a School Property Guide (SPG) entitlement. The construction of new pools at schools is typically funded by Boards, or through grants and fundraising.

For further information please refer to our website at the following link:
https://www.education.govt.nz/school/property-and-transport/school-facilities/swimming-pools/build-replace-or-remove-a-school-pool/

Operation

The New Zealand curriculum specifies that all children should be given the opportunity to learn fundamental aquatic skills by the end of Year 6. The Ministry provides all schools with operational funding to help them meet curriculum requirements. This funding also includes a Property Maintenance Grant (PMG).

For further information about the PMG, please refer to our website at the following link:
https://www.education.govt.nz/school/funding-and-financials/funding/property-maintenance-grant/

PMG funding for pools is currently calculated at a rate of $7.53 per cubic metre of capacity. However, pool funding is just one component of the PMG, and the PMG is just one component of operational funding. At schools' discretion, all of this funding is able to be used for pool maintenance.

Schools with pools onsite can use their operational funding to run and maintain the pool to a safe standard. Schools without a pool onsite can use their operational funding to transport students to another facility in the community, such as a pool run by a different school or the local council. Many schools choose to use community pools because they operate year round and provide access to trained instructors.

Schools also receive Five Year Agreement (5YA) funding for capital upgrades. 5YA funding can be used on essential infrastructure of existing pools; for example, buying a new pump when the old pump stops working.

Changes over time

Below is timeline of some of the key changes to funding provisions for pools:

Funding Provisions for School Swimming Pools	
Date of Change	**Description**
Prior to 1989	The first school property code was introduced in 1970. Prior to 1989, decisions regarding the construction and maintenance of swimming pools were made centrally, by Education Boards. During this time, government subsidies were available for most capital components of school pools at a rate of $1 for every $1 of locally contributed funds, up to specified values which varied by component and scale. Certain maintenance was also provided for.
For more specific information about funding for swimming pools from 1983 please refer to **Appendix Two**.	
1989: Tomorrow's Schools	Tomorrow's Schools altered the mechanisms of funding for school swimming pools as part of wider funding system changes. Tomorrow's Schools introduced the current devolved system which gives Boards a large degree of discretion regarding use of property funding. Entitlements to property were divided into 'code' and 'non-code' categories at the time. Pools were considered non-code items and received no capital funding, but were funded for maintenance and operations. Schools could apply under the old Financial Assistance Scheme for a contribution to the construction of a pool, as well as many other types of non-code facilities.
1999: School property code review	Due to population growth and the changing nature of education, the property code was reviewed in 1999 and became the School Property Guide (SPG). The SPG outlines the amounts of space and kinds of infrastructure that the Ministry will fund a school for, based on their roll and broader Ministry policy. Some formerly non-code items (such as school halls/multi-purpose spaces) were included in the SPG - but pools were not, based on the rationale that schools do not require a pool onsite to deliver aquatic education. Despite the distinction between SPG and non-entitlement items, schools still had a large degree of discretion over the use of their property funding. The proportion of capital upgrade funding being put towards non-core infrastructure such as swimming pools, in lieu of core infrastructure such as classrooms, was one cause for the establishment of the 5YA Funding mechanism in 2001.
Current information on the SPG is available at the following link: https://www.education.govt.nz/school/property-and-transport/property-planning/space-entitlement/	
2001: 5YA Funding	The 5YA Funding mechanism was introduced to direct capital upgrade funding toward SPG entitlement items, which were put into a priority system to ensure that funding was used to maintain essential infrastructure first. Ten Year Property Plans (10YPPs) were introduced to facilitate this. This system is still in use today.

Current information on 5YA is available at the following link:
https://www.education.govt.nz/school/funding-and-financials/funding/5-year-agreement-funding/
Current information on 10YPPs is available at the following link:
https://www.education.govt.nz/school/property-and-transport/property-planning/10ypp/

Additional information has been provided from an excerpt of the Department of Education Sites and Buildings Administration Manual, dated March 1983. This is attached as **Appendix Two.**

4. If it is true that swimming pools are generally not funded, and that schools have to rely on charity to maintain them as indicated in this press release, can you please explain the rationale for that policy, given the importance of children learning to swim in an island nation like ours?

The New Zealand curriculum specifies that all children should be given the opportunity to learn fundamental aquatic skills by the end of Year 6. The Ministry provides all schools with PMG and 5YA funding to help them maintain their property, and operational funding to help them meet curriculum requirements. Schools can deliver the aquatic curriculum in a variety of ways, such as by using existing school pools, community pools, or natural bodies of water.

We encourage schools without pools to collaborate with local community groups, councils and each other, to ensure pool access for their students. Many schools choose to use community pools because they operate year round and provide access to trained instructors. In some cases, schools work in partnership with local community groups and councils to manage facilities and redevelop existing pools. We believe this approach provides the best value for money both locally and nationally, and leads to better use of existing facilities.

Please note, the Ministry now proactively publishes OIA responses 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.

Yours sincerely

Kim Shannon
Head of Education Infrastructure Service

Appendix One: Data on state schools with swimming pools (2016–2019)

	2016			2017			2018			2019		
	State Schools	*State Schools with Pools*	*% State Schools with Pools*	*State Schools*	*State Schools with Pools*	*% State Schools with Pools*	*State Schools*	*State Schools with Pools*	*% State Schools with Pools*	*State Schools*	*State Schools with Pools*	*% State Schools with Pools*
PRIMARY	1569	1090	69.5%	1564	1087	69.5%	1562	1078	69.01%	1568	1069	68.2%
INTERMEDIATE	115	32	27.8%	115	33	28.7%	115	33	28.70%	115	32	27.8%
SECONDARY	254	110	43.3%	256	110	43.0%	256	108	42.19%	263	107	40.7%
AREA/COMPOSITE	100	37	37.0%	103	39	37.9%	103	38	36.89%	104	39	37.5%
SPECIAL	36	14	38.9%	37	14	37.8%	36	14	38.89%	36	15	41.7%
Totals	2074	1283	61.9%	2075	1283	61.8%	2072	1271	61.34%	2086	1262	60.5%

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Appendix Two: Sites and Buildings Administration Manual
Chapter 3 - School Buildings
F3.19 Swimming Pools
Department of Education
March 1983

F3.19 SWIMMING POOLS

F3.19.1 Subsidies Available. A subsidy is available at the rate of $1 for every $1 of locally contributed funds up to a maximum of $1,495 for learners pools, including relocatable pools, dressing sheds, non-slip pool surrounds, fencing and a secure storage area for pool chlorinating chemicals. In remote areas where high costs of construction are incurred, up to $1,625 may be available subject to the prior approval of the department. If any part of the maximum subsidy available at the time the pool is built is not used, the same proportionate part of the current maximum subsidy will be available to subsidise additional facilities. It is also a condition of subsidy that suitable fencing be provided to prevent unauthorised entry to the pool. (See paragraph F3.19.14).

F3.19.2 A subsidy is available at the rate of $1 for every $1 of locally contributed funds for other types of swimming pools, their dressing sheds, pool surrounds

and fencing. The maximum subsidies according to the size of the pool are shown in the next paragraph.

F3.19.3 Approved Sizes and Subsidies. The approved sizes and subsidies for learners pools and swimming pools are:

a Learners Pools:

i	Preferred size	15 metres x 5 metres
ii	Maximum size	25 metres x 6 metres
iii	Minimum size	9 metres x 4 metres
iv	Water depth graded from	0.75 metres to 0.9 metres

b Relocatable Pools

i	Minimum size	9 metres x 4 metres
ii	Preferred size	15 metres x 5 metres
iii	Water depth graded from	0.75 metres to 0.9 metres

c Swimming Pools

Approved sizes and maximum available subsidies are:

	Length Metres	Width Metres	Graded Depth Metres	Maximum Subsidy
i	20	7	0.9 - 1.1	$2,925
ii	25	12	0.9 - 1.35	$4,875
iii	33.3	12	0.9 - 1.35	$4,875

F3.19.4 The 20 metres swimming pool is the preferred size for teaching purposes at intermediate schools, while the 25 metre pool is the preferred size for teaching and competition swimming at secondary schools.

F3.19.5 Filtration. A subsidy at the rate of $1 for $1 up to a maximum of $1,625 is available for the installation of filtration plants for swimming pools and up to a maximum of $650 for learner pools which includes relocatable pools. If a gas chlorination plant is installed a mask is essential and should be supplied by the manufacturer when the equipment is installed.

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F3.19.6 Water Supply for Learner Pools and Relocatable Pools. When there is no public water supply a $1 for $1 subsidy up to a maximum of $650 is available for the provision of water from a natural source. Regard must be had for the provisions of the Water and Soil Conservation Act 1967 in matters affecting natural water.

F3.19.7 Design Standards. The design of swimming pools and filtration plants must comply with the provisions of NZSS4441:1972 and plans and specifications should be prepared by registered engineers. Structural clearances of the plans and specifications for swimming pools and learner pools are to be obtained from the local

office of the Ministry of Works and Development as should each proposal for the installation of filtration plant. A checklist shown in Appendix A to this chapter sets out the information required. In selecting relocatable pools regard must be made for the provisions of NZSS4441:1972 and the local office of the Ministry of Works and Development must approve the proposed filtration plant.

F3.19.8 Shallow Pools. Some schools have a full sized pool with a depth of 2 metres (7 ft) or 2.4 metres (8 ft) at the deep end. Where a school wishes to build to a uniform depth of 1 metre (3 ft 6 in) it is policy to provide a subsidy of $1 for $1 up to a maximum of $1,625 in addition to a subsidy up to a maximum of $1,625 for the installation of a filtration plant.

F3.19.9 Municipal Pools. The equivalent of the school learner pool subsidy may be made available to a municipality to assist in the construction of a pool which meets an instructional need. If a school has no pool of its own and is prepared to forego any future claim to a swimming pool subsidy, its subsidy may be made available towards the community pool. In return for the contribution agreement would need to be reached between the local authority and the school controlling authority for free and adequate use during school hours. Normally only one subsidy is payable but where the swimming pool complex provides both a learners pool and a full-size pool there is no objection to two subsidies being made available where both primary and secondary schools use the facility. Only one filtration plant subsidy should be contributed.

F3.19.10 Maintenance and Replacement of Relocatable Pool Fabric Liners. The fabric liners of many relocatable pools are liable to damage such as minor tearing and punctures. The cost of maintenance or replacement of fabric liners is the responsibility of the school.

F3.19.11 Replacement Cost of Pools. Financial approval must be obtained before the construction of replacement pools is commenced. Government grants for the full costs of replacing swimming and relocatable pools at schools will be made in the following circumstances:

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a When the school is being transferred to another site and the existing pool can no longer be used conveniently.

b When the pool is lost through building operations, provided that any grant is limited to the cost of replacing the existing facilities. The cost of any improvements or extension of existing facilities when reconstructed would be a charge against funds contributed locally.

F3.19.12 New subsidies for swimming pools will be granted up to the normal limits in the following circumstances:

a When a school roll increases to the point where the present pool is inadequate and a larger pool must be provided to match the anticipated maximum roll.

F3.19.13

b When a pool has to be replaced because of normal wear and tear, further patching and repairing being impracticable.

c Relocatable pools have a useful life of ten years or more. After ten years of use a replacement subsidy may be considered.

The financing of these projects will be in the same manner as for the construction of entirely new projects, the maximum subsidies allowed being those available for the various sizes of pools proposed. (See paragraph F3.19.3 for approved sizes and subsidies).

F3.19.13 Replacement Cost of Filtration Plants and Components. The main cost factors involved in the operation of filtration plants are the eventual replacement of the plant, the replacement of component parts, and the cost of labour. Present policy on subsidies for the replacement of filtration plants or components for swimming pools and learner pools is as follows:

a Filtration plants are regarded as having a useful life of 15 years, and as having depreciation of 1/15th (6 2/3%) of the subsidy each year. The authorising body (education board or the department) may, after 15 years of use of the plant, approve a further subsidy up to the current approved maximum for a new plant. The amount of the replacement subsidy will be based on the cost of the new plant less the proceeds from the sale of the old plant.

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b If a school wishes to replace a filtration plant before the end of the 15-year period of use, subsidy on replacement will be based on the cost of the new plant less the proceeds from the sale of the old plant, and on a proportionate basis according to the number of years the unit has been in use. If, as in the following example, the plant has been in use for nine years, the price of the new plant is $2,000, and the proceeds from the sale of the old equipment are $400, then the amount of the new subsidy will be $480.

Example:		
	Price of new plant	$2,000
	Less proceeds from the sale of the old plant	400
	Actual cost	$1,600
	Normal subsidy after 15 years ($1 for $1)	800
	Subsidy payable after 9 years: $\left(\frac{800}{1} \times \frac{9}{15}\right)$	480

This proportionate scale will not necessarily be applied rigidly in all cases. Where special circumstances can be shown to exist, an application will be considered on its merits, and an increased subsidy may be approved.

c School authorities owning filtration plants with a maximum subsidy limit may also apply for interim subsidies for the replacement of major component parts at the rate of 1/15th total subsidy for each year of operation. Several such interim subsidies may be applied for within any 15-year period provided that the total amount does not exceed the maximum subsidy limit.

d Individual interim subsidies being applied for must be in excess of $100 net, including labour costs; all such applications being subject to close scrutiny by the authorising body. As in the case of plant replacement subsidies, interim subsidies must be approved by the authorising body in all cases.

F3.19.14 Security of Swimming Pools. During a vacation, small children were found bathing in a swimming pool at a secondary school without adult supervision. Although the pool itself was surrounded by a suitable fence, the gate was unlocked and open. In the event of an accident in these circumstances, the controlling authority could be held liable, with possible serious consequences. Inadequate protection against unauthorised use or entry could also lead to damage by vandals. All controlling authorities should ensure that:

a Pools and their environs are adequately secured against unauthorised entry.

b Suitable adult supervision is available when the pools are in use.

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F3.19.15 Storage of Swimming Pool Chemicals. Attention is to be given to the storage of swimming pool chemicals, in particular the chemical calcium hypochlorite. The following information should be noted:

a Ideally, all hazardous and combustible materials should be stored in a separate building constructed of permanent materials.

b It is not advisable to store an excessive quantity of calcium hypochlorite on school premises; supplies should be restricted to immediate needs. If a suitable separate building is not provided, it is recommended that not more than two 50 kg containers be held in stock. Chemicals should not be stored in main school buildings.

c Any quantity of calcium hypochlorite is to be stored in a secure, cool, dry and well ventilated area. Storage in the filter plant shed is permissible provided that:

i the supplies are restricted.

ii this shed is secure and well aired.

iii the plant operator is aware of the dangers of chlorine gas in a restricted space.

d Under no circumstances should the chemicals come in contact with oxidisable material such as paint, tobacco, cleaning compounds, soap products, kerosene, rags, paper, or explosion and fire may result. These products should not be stored in the same shed as calcium hypochlorite.

e Store calcium hypochlorite in its original container.

f Drums should be left upright and not subject to dropping or rolling.

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g Calcium hypochlorite powder or solution must not be mixed with any other chemicals.

h Handling procedures as published from time to time in the Education Gazette are to be strictly adhered to.

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