

Thank you for your email of 3 December 2018 to the Ministry of Education requesting the following information:

- *"a copy of all correspondence between yourself and your Minister since 26 October 2017"*

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

There were six pieces of correspondence between the Secretary for Education and the Minister of Education, Hon Chris Hipkins within the period 26 October 2017 to 3 December 2018. We are releasing documents one and six to you in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act to protect the privacy of natural persons. Documents two to five are released to you in full. A document list with decisions on their release is attached as **Appendix One** to this response.

Please note that Document 3 refers to an addendum to advice provided to the Minister on proposed amendments to Communities of Online Learning. These Education Reports are published on our website: <http://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/information-releases/information-releases-from-2018/issues-being-considered-for-an-education-bill/>

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

Sean Teddy
Deputy Secretary
Office of the Secretary for Education

Appendix One

Document Number	Date	Description	Decision on Release
1	13 December 2017	Letter from the Secretary for Education to the Minister of Education re: holiday delegations.	Released in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
2	9 March 2018	Letter from the Secretary for Education to the Minister of Education re: acting arrangements.	Released in full.
3	10 April 2018	Letter from the Secretary for Education to the Minister of Education re: Communities of Online Learning.	Released in full.
4	26 September 2018	Letter from the Minister of Education to the Secretary for Education re: University of Canterbury.	Released in full.
5	20 November 2018	Email invitation from the Minister of Education to the Secretary for Education to attend Christmas drinks.	Released in full.
6	26 November 2018	Letter from the Secretary for Education to the Minister of Education re: holiday delegations.	Released in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.



13 December 2017

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education
Parliament Buildings

Tēnā koe Minister

s 9(2)(a) OIA

In my absence, I have delegated responsibility to Zoe Griffith, Deputy Secretary, Business Enablement and Support. Zoe can be contacted directly on [REDACTED]

s 9(2)(a) OIA

s 9(2)(a) OIA

[REDACTED] I have delegated responsibility to Sean Teddy, Deputy Secretary, Office of the Secretary for Education. Sean can be contacted directly on [REDACTED]

s 9(2)(a) OIA

As previously advised to you, on 5-6 February 2018, I will be attending Waitangi celebrations.

The Associate Ministers and the State Services Commissioner have been informed.

Ngā mihi

Iona Holsted
Secretary for Education



9 March 2018

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education
Parliament Buildings

Tēnā koe Minister

This letter advises of my acting arrangements while we are in Europe for the International Summit on the Teaching Profession from Thursday 15 March to Monday 26 March inclusive.

Tim Fowler, Chief Executive, Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) has agreed to act as Secretary for Education and Chief Executive of the Ministry of Education over this period. He will stand down from his TEC role during this time.

I am pleased Tim has agreed to this arrangement, and I see this as a valuable opportunity to continue strengthening the links across the education agencies.

Your Associate Ministers and the State Services Commissioner have also been informed.

Ngā mihi

Iona Holsted
Secretary for Education



10 April 2018

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

Tēnā koe Minister

Last Wednesday, the Board Chair of Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu, Dame Karen Sewell, raised concerns with me regarding the Ministry's report to you about Communities of Online Learning (METIS 1103827).

I have since met with Dame Karen to discuss her Board's concerns, and she has written to me setting out the details of these. I have attached her letter in full for your information.

As noted in Dame Karen's letter, Te Kura was not consulted in the course of developing our report to you. Consequently, the report does not accurately reflect the views of Te Kura, and omits some information that Te Kura considers should be brought to your attention.

I have advised Dame Karen of my expectation that when we are developing advice that substantively relates to Te Kura, we ensure that Te Kura has an opportunity to consider and comment on this. I have conveyed my apologies to her Board that this did not happen in this instance.

I want to also offer my apologies to you, as Minister, for this deficiency in our process. While I do not consider that the concerns raised by Te Kura materially affect the recommendations we made, or your subsequent decision-making, nonetheless this has undermined the quality of advice that we provided to you. This is deeply disappointing to me.

In the interests of transparency, and in order to ensure that the views of Te Kura are reflected on the public record, I intend to provide you with an addendum to the Communities of Online Learning report, which will detail the concerns raised by Te Kura and any Ministry comments on these. This will be provided to you shortly.

Subject to your agreement, I would proactively release that report.

I have advised Te Kura that I am committed to making this right, and to ensuring that it does not happen again. Please also be assured of this commitment.

Ngā mihi



Iona Holsted
Secretary for Education

cc: Dame Karen Sewell, Board Chair, Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu

Released under the Official Information Act 1982



Te Kura

TE AHO O TE KURA POUNAMU

THE CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL

6 April 2018

Call free 0800 65 99 88
www.tekura.school.nz

Iona Holsted
Secretary for Education
Ministry of Education
PO Box 1666
WELLINGTON

Email: peter.wood@education.govt.nz

Tena koe e te rangatira Iona,

Thank you for meeting me at such short notice yesterday. At the end of our meeting I said that I would provide you in writing with the specific details of the Board's concerns about the 'Education Report: Proposed amendments to Communities of Online Learning' and you said that you would take the Report off the website.

The Board is concerned that the Report contains errors of fact and omission, as well as opinions for which the evidence is unclear, absent or out-of-date. It does not reflect the significant recent advances made by Te Kura in using online learning to enable the effective delivery of personalised, authentic learning programmes. We believe the Report provides a misleading and negative characterisation of Te Kura and distance education in general.

This letter is not our response to the Minister's decision to repeal the legislation setting up Communities of Online Learning, on which we will make a submission.

Our key concerns with the Report are:

1. A lack of consultation with Te Kura about the Report.
2. A failure to clearly distinguish Te Kura's model of distance education delivery from online learning.
3. A reliance on outdated evidence to support the conclusion that distance education is not suitable for at-risk students, while omitting more recent evidence that suggests that in many cases it can be.
4. Statements in the Report that Te Kura is a proponent of becoming a 'school of choice'.
5. A lack of acknowledgement that the Ministry already uses the referrals process in its Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu Enrolment and Dual Registration Policy to 'off-ramp' thousands of at-risk students into distance education every year.

6. A lack of clarity about what “returning Te Kura to its previous role in the system” means.
7. Te Kura is not acknowledged as a key collaborator within the system that welcomes competition in the distance education space.
8. The statement on the achievement of dual registered students.

1. Lack of consultation with Te Kura about the Report

We have concerns with the process and the lack of consultation in the writing of the Report, as well as findings in the Report itself.

We became aware of the Report through a media alert on the Minister’s announcement of Wednesday 28 March, which linked to this Report. The Ministry has not sought to meet with the Te Kura Board, *Para 30*.

You provide no evidence to support the statement that, as a School Board of Trustees “Te Kura is therefore unlikely to support a return to an environment where enrolment with it is restricted.” As the Board of a Crown entity, we are committed to implementing any decision made by Government, *Para 29*.

2. A failure to clearly distinguish Te Kura’s model of distance education delivery from ‘online learning’

The Report consistently refers to ‘online learning’. However online learning is just a medium - it does not describe an educational or pedagogical approach.

Te Kura is a distance education provider that provides personalised programmes of learning with a blended approach, which includes online provision.

Te Kura’s learning programmes involve close relationships between teachers and learners, collaborative learning and learning within communities.

We collaborate across the system, we partner with schools to provide staffing and dual tuition, including students in Alternative Education and Activity Centres. We collaborate with Virtual Learning Networks. We support students who are unable to enrol at a face-to-face school and support many students who have been disengaged from education.

3. A reliance on outdated evidence to support the conclusion that distance education is not suitable for at-risk students, while omitting more recent evidence that suggests that in many cases it can be

The Report presents outdated evidence and omits evidence where Te Kura’s delivery model has achieved good results. The Report relies on a 2012 Ministry of Education Report and a 2013 ERO Report on Te Kura as supporting evidence for the conclusion that distance education is not suitable for at-risk students. Since these reports Te Kura has made significant changes in responding to the needs of these students. However, there is no reference to the 2015 ERO Report on Te Kura, the

recent ERO Reports evaluating Te Kura's Big Picture Pilots, or analysis undertaken by the Ministry that shows the improvements that have been made by Te Kura, *Para 20*.

4. Statements in the Report that Te Kura is a proponent of becoming a 'school of choice'

The statements made in the Report that "Te Kura has been a proponent of becoming a school of choice for any student" and that "Te Kura has been a proponent of it becoming a school of choice for any student within the system who wishes to study through the online medium" are incorrect, *Para 29*.

Te Kura is a proponent of broadening access to allow students to make an informed choice that they would benefit from Te Kura's personalised and authentic programmes of learning.

Currently, it often takes some time before students who have left or been excluded from traditional schools are able to enrol at Te Kura, and as a result many have suffered gaps in their education.

5. A lack of acknowledgement that the Ministry already uses the referrals process to 'off-ramp' thousands of at-risk students into distance education every year

The Ministry of Education already uses the enrolment policy to refer at-risk students to Te Kura. In 2017, approximately 60 percent of Te Kura's 3,290 full time enrolments were students who were considered by the Ministry to be at-risk and referred to Te Kura. This is not stated anywhere in the Report. We believe this is misleading given the stated concerns that schools would use COOL to off-ramp at risk students, *Para 3*.

Recent ERO evaluations have found that these students make significant progress and achieve in a distance learning environment, where the appropriate supports are in place.

6. A lack of clarity about what "returning Te Kura to its previous role in the system" means

There is a lack of clarity on what the Report is proposing for Te Kura in the recommendation that Te Kura return to its "previous role in the system – a school that enrolls students who cannot access a face-to-face school and provides supplementary tuition for students enrolled in a school for various reasons", *11c and c iii*.

It recommends removing Te Kura as a 'school of choice' for any student in the system. This ignores the 16 to 19-year-old and adult learners who can currently choose to enrol at Te Kura. In 2017, we had 4,826 young-adult and 2,456 adult enrolments.

Neither does the Report cover Te Kura Summer School. This has been running successfully for three-years, in close contact with the schools that the students were enrolled with previously.

7. Te Kura is not acknowledged as a key collaborator within the system that welcomes competition in the distance education space

On the statement that "teachers and students be able to choose an online learning option provided within the state system that best meets their needs, rather than choosing Te Kura because it is a 'free' resource to the school.", *Para 9*. Te Kura is a part of the state education system. We always have been.

Te Kura has absolutely no concerns about other providers entering the distance education space and believes that online learning enables even greater collaboration. In 2017, Te Kura delivered teaching to 1,800 students from 197 schools that were part of a Virtual Learning Network.

The statement that increased competition would drive down the size of Te Kura, increase its agility and responsiveness, presents our size as a negative and lacks evidence, *Background 3c*. We would counter that size creates the economies of scale that enable wide offerings. An example of this is in Te Kura's provision of dual tuition when schools are unable to offer a subject or have a small senior class size. In 2017, Te Kura provided dual tuition to 9,843 students from 725 providers.

We have gone through extensive transformations in our long history, including the recent improvements enabled by developments in technology to enable online provision. We will continue to anticipate and respond to the needs of the education sector.

8. Statement on the achievement of dual registered students

The Report makes the statement that a high proportion of students who enrol to do supplementary dual tuition do not complete the course and links this to the entire budget for supplementary tuition. This is misleading, *Para 17, Footnote 7*.

There is no single measure for what constitutes a completion of a course for our dual students, and there are many variables. Some dual students who enrol with us are not yet at NCEA level, so not measured by external results. Many dual students are in Alternative Education and Activity Centres and Teen Parent Units. Te Kura also supports schools who have emergency staffing vacancies. Another significant variable is the support the student receives for their dual tuition from the school or centre in which they are enrolled. Many of these students have no intention or need to complete a full course of study. Despite this, 64 percent of the 2017 dual students with Te Kura in NCEA subjects that stayed on the roll for half a year or more achieved NCEA results.

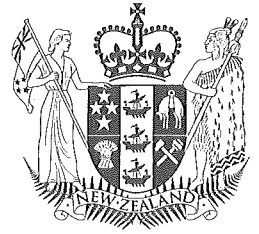
Again, thank you for your time and your consideration of our concerns.

Ngā mihi nui,



Karen Sewell
Board Chair
Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu

Hon Chris Hipkins



MP for Rimutaka

Minister of Education

Minister of State Services

Leader of the House

Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services

26 SEP 2018

Iona Holsted
Secretary for Education
Ministry of Education
PO Box 1666
WELLINGTON 6140

Dear Iona

University of Canterbury – payment of \$50 million of capital funding

On 23 October 2013, Cabinet agreed (EGI Min (13) 25/7) to provide a capital funding envelope of up to \$260 million to contribute to the rebuilding of the University of Canterbury's (UC's) science and engineering facilities. Cabinet established a Non-Departmental Capital Expenditure appropriation "Support for the University of Canterbury" in Vote Tertiary Education to give effect to this decision.

To date, \$210 million of the Crown's \$260 million capital contribution has been paid to UC. As specified in the funding agreement between the Crown and UC, the final \$50 million payment was to be paid in the 2018/19 year conditional on enrolment numbers. Unless equivalent full-time student (EFTS) numbers were above 14,800 EFTS in 2018, the full \$50 million was to be paid in full.

The latest enrolment data shows that EFTS numbers will be well below this level in 2018. The latest forecasts, following semester two enrolment numbers, show that EFTS will be around 14,000 EFTS in 2018. I can confirm that UC has met the conditions of the funding agreement between the Crown and UC regarding payment of the final \$50 million of Crown capital funding. As such, Minister Robertson and I have authorised for the full \$50 million payment to be made to UC.

In order to effect the payment agreed by Cabinet, I request that you, as the Secretary for Education, make payment to UC of \$50 million from the Non-Departmental Capital Expenditure appropriation "Support for the University of Canterbury" in Vote Tertiary Education as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CH', written over a faint watermark.

Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

From: Hon Chris Hipkins [<mailto:Chris.Hipkins@parliament.govt.nz>]

Sent: Tuesday, 20 November 2018 5:06 p.m.

To: Angelique Kerr <Angelique.Kerr@parliament.govt.nz>

Subject: Invitation: Christmas Drinks



Hon Chris Hipkins

Minister of Education, Minister of State Services, Leader of the House,
Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services
warmly invites you to drinks and nibbles to acknowledge your work and support during 2018

Thursday 13 December 2018

5:30pm – 7:00pm

6.3 Executive Wing

Beehive

RSVP by Friday 7 December 2018 to angelique.kerr@parliament.govt.nz



26 November 2018

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education
Parliament Buildings

Kia ora Minister

s 9(2)(a) OIA

In my absence, I have delegated responsibilities as below:

s 9(2)(a) OIA

to Monday 7 January 2019

Claire Douglas, Deputy Secretary, Graduate Achievement Vocations and Careers will act. Claire can be contacted directly on

s 9(2)(a) OIA

Tuesday 8 January 2019 –

s 9(2)(a) OIA

Ellen MacGregor-Reid, Deputy Secretary, Early Learning & Student Achievement will act. Ellen can be contacted directly on

s 9(2)(a) OIA

Your Associate Ministers and the State Services Commissioner have also been informed.

Nāku noa, nā

Iona Holsted
Secretary for Education