



9 July 2020

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Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for writing to the Ministry of Education on 11 June 2020, to request the following information connected to the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction:

- a i. *Could I please be sent any internal and external correspondence, with any other government departments, and or any advice given to the Minister for Education, as well as any correspondence between 1 December 2018 until June 10 2020 relating to the 'Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction's 'Whakawātea te Ara' (vision for Māori Health and Wellbeing), and 'Vai Niu' (vision for Pacific Peoples Wellbeing) and their implementation.*
- a ii. *Could the Ministry please outline what their response has been to consider, incorporate and implement 'Whakawātea te Ara', 'Vai Niu' into all your current work, and future strategies?*
- a.iii. *How is the Ministry addressing the specific call in 'Vai Niu' for equity for Rainbow Pacific peoples.*
- a.iii. *How is the Ministry addressing the specific call in 'Vai Niu' for "Greater recognition of the peoples of the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau and those nations' constitutional agreements with New Zealand is essential."*

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

I am refusing your request under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information requested does not exist. There is no correspondence between us and any other department or agency regarding *Whakawātea te Ara* or *Vai Niu*, and we did not brief any of our Ministers on these specific sections in the time frame of your request.

As you know, *He Ara Oranga: Report of the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction* is the result of an independent inquiry, which was reported to the Minister of Health in November 2018. The Ministry of Education received the report in full, but did not receive correspondence relating specifically to *Whakawātea te Ara* or *Vai Niu*.

Supporting the health and wellbeing of Māori and Pacific peoples is a priority for us. We have outlined below some of our relevant work.

### **Equity for Rainbow Pacific peoples**

Realising equity for Rainbow Pacific peoples will require ongoing and consistent efforts. The Ministry has developed the online *Inclusive Education: Guide to LGBTIQ+ students*. Schools are encouraged to use this guidance when developing their health education programme, and when creating a school wide inclusive environment for young people. This is found at the following location: <https://www.inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/supporting-lgbtqa-students/>. This guide includes some resources which explore Pacific understandings about sex characteristics, gender, and sexuality diversity. These are available at: <https://www.inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/supporting-lgbtqa-students/explore-maori-and-pasifika-understandings-about-sex-characteristics-gender-and-sexuality-diversity>.

The Ministry is undertaking a refresh of the guidelines for relationships, gender and sexuality education. These will have a greater emphasis on how relationships weave throughout the sexuality education pathway from year 1 through to year 13. As well as tying back to broader themes around wellbeing and mental health, we will also be strengthening the LGBTIQ+ content and ensuring concepts of sexuality are seen through a Pacific and Māori lens.

Government recently announced funding for up to 40 new curriculum leads who will work directly with schools, kura, early learning services and kōhanga reo to support the teaching of mental health and healthy relationships and promote the wellbeing of learners. This announcement is available at <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/new-roles-help-health-and-healthy-relationship-teaching>.

These leads will support teachers and kaiako to deliver high quality Health and Physical Education and Hauora programmes, including the Wellbeing and Mental Health Guidelines and the Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidelines. They will work with a range of stakeholders, including Pacific organisations and Pacific communities, to promote environments relating to wellbeing, and foster sensitive conversations that support children and young people.

### **Greater recognition of the peoples of the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau**

In 2018, the Government agreed to the establishment of a Pacific Realm Policy Framework, to help lift the quality and consistency of our engagement with, and support for the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau. This framework sets out our obligations, including identifying opportunities between coherence between policies to support the indigenous languages of Realm countries both at home and in NZ.

Work to support learners and families with Niuean, Tokelauan and Cook Island heritage has included the development of curriculum language resources, including the launch of six Tokelau storybooks and teacher materials to support the teaching and learning of Gagana Tokelau in 2019. Additionally, projects supporting the early language and literacy of learners from Niue, Cook Islands and Tokelau are currently underway. The projects help teachers work in partnership with families and Pacific realm communities to grow learners literacy capabilities, ensuring the students are supported in their learning pathway from early childhood education. The Ministry has also been working closely with the Niue and Cook Islands Departments of Education on the review of NCEA. This includes an ongoing strategy to ensure that the needs of learners in the Realm nations are taken into account as NCEA evolves.

The Action Plan for Pacific Education, to be released shortly, is guided by the principle of Pacific diversity, which in practice will mean including the obligations and relationships with our Realm countries. Part of the development of the Action Plan included holding specific fono with affected communities - in 2018 with Niue, Cook Islands and Tokelauan communities and in 2019 with Tokelauan communities in Lower Hutt, Porirua and Auckland, and the Cook Islands community in Tokoroa.

Thank you again for your request. Section 28(3) of the Act gives you the right to refer my response to an Ombudsman for review. You can do this by emailing [info@education.govt.nz](mailto:info@education.govt.nz).

Nāku noa, nā



Dr Andrea Schöllmann  
**Deputy Secretary**  
**Education System Policy**