

Hon Chris Hipkins

MP for Rimutaka

Minister of Education

Minister of State Services

Leader of the House

Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services



Ref: OIA00362

S. Paurini

fyi-request-11540-dc64f8ff@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear S. Paurini

Thank you for your email of 28 October 2019 requesting the following information:

- *a full file explaining the rationale & all planning including draft plans and a final version of the government's fees free policy. Secondly, provide a list of all individuals involved with designing the policy. Please provide copies of their CVs.*

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

Work carried out to design Fees Free policy by the Government in 2017, for introduction in 2018, is available at link below. This includes the Cabinet paper from 27 November 2017, *Making tertiary education more affordable: fees-free education in 2018* where Cabinet approved key design features for Fees Free.

<http://education.govt.nz/our-work/information-releases/information-releases-2012-2017/100-days/>.

Some minor changes to Fees Free settings were agreed to in 2018 for start of the 2019 year. Reports related to this are available below, including the Cabinet paper from 20 August 2018, which agreed to the changes for 2019, *Fees-Free Tertiary Education and Training: improvements for 2019*.

<http://education.govt.nz/our-work/information-releases/issue-specific-releases/release-of-advice-relating-to-changes-to-the-fees-free-policy-in-2019/>.

No further policy changes were made to the design of Fees Free settings for 2020.

The Ministry has also published information on the use of Fees Free in 2018 here:

<https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/tertiary-education/fees-free>.

I would like to refer you to the documents available above for the key people involved in the design of the fees free policy and subsequent reforms. Officials provided this advice, with the names of senior officials responsible for the advice available in the published reports. Decisions on the design of Fees Free were made by Cabinet and a group of Ministers delegated to make decisions. This groups included: Hon Grant Robertson, Hon Chris Hipkins, Hon Carmel Sepuloni, Hon Stuart Nash and Hon Tracey Martin.

Additionally, the Governance Group initially comprised the Chief Executives or Deputy Chief Executives of relevant government departments, which were; the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education Commission, New Zealand Qualifications Authority, Inland Revenue Department, Ministry of Social Development, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Treasury, and State Services Commission. As at 5 June 2019, the Governance Group was comprised of the Deputy Chief Executive or Group Manager level representatives from the same agencies, with the exception of the State Services Commission who no longer sit on the Fees Free Cross Agency Governance Group

I am refusing your request for the curriculum vitae's of people involved the design of fees free, under section 18(g) of the Act as the information requested is not held by my office.

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'CHIPKINS', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education