



9 November 2020

N J Mete

By email: fyi-request-13927-0243d07c@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe N J Mete

I refer to your request for information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) dated **7 October 2020**:

1. *“How much funding has Victoria University received from [the Tertiary Education Commission’s] hardship fund?”*
2. *“Of that funding, how much has gone to students to cover the cost of their University accommodation [(that being all 14 halls listed [here](#), regardless of whether or not they are directly owned/managed by VUW)] ”*

Context

The University is conscious of the pressure on many of its students as a result of COVID-19 and has provided a comprehensive package of support to assist them to cope with the financial, emotional and practical impacts of the pandemic.

Accommodation support from the University

In terms of accommodation support, students in University-owned halls of residence were not charged any accommodation fees during alert levels 3 and 4 and were given until **15 May** to cancel their hall contract without financial penalty. In addition, students who opted not to return to their hall of residence until Trimester 2 were not charged any fees until they returned. These fee discounts have cost the University \$6,872,560. In addition, the University provided students living in Stafford House, which is managed and operated by UniLodge, with a four week full rent rebate over the alert level 4 period, regardless of whether they remained in the hall in that period or had left to stay with family or friends. This was at a cost of \$270,750 to the University.

Other financial support

The University has always operated a Hardship Fund as an emergency fund which all students contribute to. The purpose of this fund is to help students facing financial difficulties. It is open all year to students who are already studying and need help at a particular point in time. It covers costs such as necessary medical, dental, or optical costs, unforeseen flatting or family problems and costs related to teaching experience placements.

Hardship Equity Grants are to encourage students who are facing financial hardship to continue in their studies at the University. Students apply before the start of the trimester and usually find out whether their application has been successful in the first week of the

trimester—they are designed to give students some certainty that they will receive the necessary financial support to stay on.

The table below outlines the number and value of hardship grants, and other financial support programmes provided between **15 March 2020** and **28 October 2020**:

Grant type	Grants approved	Amount granted
Hardship Fund (includes Tutor Relief Fund and Study abroad flight reimbursement)	750	\$739,362
Hardship Fund Equity Grants	169	\$230,700
Accommodation grant for students in VUW halls	2,246 students	\$5,792,183
Accommodation fee rebate for Stafford house residents	239 students	\$270,750
Total	3404	\$7,032,995

Funding received from the TEC's Hardship Fund for Learners (HAFL)

In addition to the support provided through the University's Hardship Fund, the University has received \$912,173.49 from the HAFL to distribute to students experiencing financial hardship this year. This information is [publicly available](#).

Amount of funding from HAFL that has gone to cover student accommodation

Please see the table below which sets out the amount of funding from the HAFL that has gone to cover student accommodation, broken down by hall.

Hall	Total HAFL support for student accommodation costs by Hall
222 Willis	\$3,272
Boulcott Hall	\$3,468
Capital Hall	\$16,080
Cumberland Hall	\$9,580
Education House	\$6,491
Everton Hall	\$3,035
Helen Lowry	\$8,811
Joan Stevens	\$5,671
KJ Hall	\$9,334
Stafford House	\$1,953
Te Puni Village	\$11,004
UniHall	\$692
Victoria House	\$2,000
Weir House	\$14,183

Whānau House	\$21,918
Total	\$112,578

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact me at oiarequests@vuw.ac.nz.

Yours sincerely

Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington