



Charter School Agency

11/10/2024

John Wilson
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Tēnā koe John

OIA: 1335595 – Charter School Agency expenditure and Establishment Board costs

Thank you for your email of 5 September 2024 to the Charter School Agency (the CSA) requesting the following information:

I am requesting information under the Official Information Act 1982 regarding the Charter School Agency. Specifically, I would like to request the following:

- 1. Details of the total expenditure the Charter School Agency has incurred.*
- 2. A copy of the current budget for the Charter School Agency.*
- 3. Details on remuneration, per diems, and any other compensation or allowances for all members of The Establishment Board, including salaries, fees, and financial benefits.*
- 4. Records of all meetings held by The Establishment Board, including dates and locations.*
- 5. A detailed breakdown of the costs associated with holding meetings by The Establishment Board, including venue, travel, administrative, and other relevant expenses.*

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

In response to **part one** of your request, the CSA was established on 1 July 2024 and for the three months to 30 September 2024, the set-up costs for the establishment of the agency totalled \$865,204.

Regarding **part two** of your request, the departmental budget for the establishment of the CSA is \$12.816 million for the current financial year. The CSA will soon commence contractual negotiations with charter school sponsors, and premature release of budget information would reveal the CSA's negotiating position. As such, I am withholding a copy of the current budget for the CSA under section 9(2)(j) of the Act, to enable a Minister of the Crown or any public service agency or organisation holding the information to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations).

As required under section 9(1) of the Act, I have considered the public interest in releasing the information withheld. I do not consider that the public interest considerations favouring the release of this information are sufficient to outweigh the need to withhold it at this time.

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In response to **part three** of your request, the CSA covers costs associated with members' attendance at meetings, such as transport and other actual and reasonable expenses. Fees for the Establishment Board are set in line with the Cabinet Fees Framework. The Chair of the Establishment Board is being remunerated at \$800 a day, and members of the Establishment Board at \$550 per day. The Board is classified as a Group 4 body under the Cabinet Fees Framework, and further information regarding this classification is available at paragraph 18 of the following Education Report: https://assets.education.govt.nz/public/Documents/our-work/information-releases/Advice-Seen-by-our-Ministers/February-2024/1322056_Redacted.pdf.

Regarding **parts four and five** of your request, since 1 July 2024 when the Charter School Agency was established, to the date of your request, the Establishment Board has met on the following occasions:

- 5 July 2024, online
- 25 July 2024, online
- 13 August 2024, online
- 3 September 2024, online and in-person.

As you will note, the meetings primarily took place online, and the only costs incurred were fees of the Establishment Board members for their time. The approximate total cost of these four meetings was \$2,928.10.

Thank you again for your email. You have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review my decision on your request, in accordance with section 28 of the Act. You can do this by writing to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or to Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Nāku noa, nā



Jane Lee
Chief Executive
Charter School Agency