



22 DEC 2017

Mr Patrick O'Boyle
fyi-request-6897-0a467002@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr O'Boyle

On 27 November 2017, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *The total amount spent by the Ministry on the "Just Start - Studylink" advertising on Facebook encouraging students to apply for student support in 2018. I would also like to know what demographic indicators have been used to target this advertising.*

StudyLink's annual student awareness programme encouraging new and returning tertiary students to apply by 16 December was introduced in 2013 and is a core part of the Ministry's business plan for managing the large volume of Student Allowance and Student Loan applications received each year.

The awareness programme has been very successful in spreading the traditional January/February influx of applications, and ensuring students receive their entitlements on time.

Students and their representatives, such as the New Zealand Union of Student Associations have responded very positively to the programme. Over 88% of students surveyed in March this year said they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the service they received the last time they contacted StudyLink.

Each year we involve tertiary students in the development of the theme for the awareness programme and in reviewing the concepts.

The theme for the 2017/18 awareness programme is "Just Start" and its objectives are to:

- alert students to the need to apply by Saturday 16 December 2017
- drive applications and evidence from all students through the online channel and keep them there
- encourage students to provide supporting documentation promptly following their application.

The Just Start message was developed using feedback from Year 13 and current tertiary students. It is designed to reassure applicants that all they have to do is begin and they will see the process is not overwhelming, with information available to support them.

The Ministry debrief on the awareness programme each season to look at ways of improving effectiveness and achieving cost savings.

The awareness programme is delivered through multi-channel communications, website messaging and a direct email campaign, including advertising on Facebook.

Page 1 of 2

The amount spent by the Ministry on Facebook advertising for the 2017/18 awareness programme was \$2,250. This amount does not include costs for concept development, design or the production of the communications assets.

The multi-channel approach to the awareness programme is designed to put the message in front of two target groups as often as possible in the period 1 October to 16 December. The target groups are those already in tertiary study and receiving a Student Loan and/or Allowance who are planning to return to study in the next academic year, and those starting tertiary study for the first time.

We use demographic information to target the Facebook component of the awareness programme:

- Returning students:
 - ages 18 to 24
 - students and individuals who have registered themselves as attending various education institutions in New Zealand.
- Year 13:
 - ages 16 to 18
 - high school students and millennials.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider public shortly. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response concerning 'Just Start' Facebook advertising with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Ruth Bound
Deputy Chief Executive, Service Delivery