



Te Pūkenga

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1 November 2024



Tēnā koe [redacted]

Request under the Official Information Act 1982

Thank you for your emailed letter of 11 October 2024. You referred to my Ngā Taipitopito email to all Te Pūkenga kaimahi at point 1 within your letter, and at point 5 you requested the following information from Western Institute of Technology at Taranaki (WITT) | Te Pūkenga – New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology:

We request a copy of any Te Pūkenga Regional ITP Viability (RIV) project report/s to the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), pertaining to WITT.

We also note your letter to [redacted] at WITT, dated 21 October, forwarded to my office on 25 October. While you refer to Section 4(1A)(c)(i) of the Employment Relations Act 2000, your request above is being considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). I understand that [redacted] and the team at WITT will be addressing your other concerns directly. This letter provides a formal decision solely on your request, as quoted above, under the OIA.

Background

Te Pūkenga was directed by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) to obtain specialist support to review and improve the financial viability of our 16 provider-based business divisions - regional Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs) to support their ability to become standalone entities in future. Calibre Partners, Volte, PricewaterhouseCoopers, and Deloitte are undertaking this work as part of the Regional ITP Viability (RIV) programme.

In mid-August 2024, the specialist consultants provided draft reports to confirm the financial position of each business division, understand the profitability of programmes and delivery sites, and assess the utilisation of assets.

Following this work, consultants developed interim high-level plans to improve the financial viability and financial positions of the ITPs. This is the work referred to in my internal newsletter, Ngā Taipitopito, to all Te Pūkenga kaimahi and to which your request relates.

These reports provided high level views about whether each ITP is viable, the timeframe to achieve viability (if possible), and the scale and scope of change required in terms of property, programmes, and people.

The final and more comprehensive plans, to be developed by late-November, will provide an overview of how each regional ITP can become a viable, stand-alone entity, or how it might minimise financial losses and operate as part of a federation, for example. This report will also outline what needs to be done now and in 2025 to implement the recommendations and support business division viability from 1 January 2026.

The work the consultants are undertaking through the RIV programme forms part of our continued provision of advice to the TEC and Minister for Tertiary Education and Skills. This in turn will feed into the options for consideration for final government decisions to be made regarding the way forward for New Zealand's Vocational Education and Training sector and the position of ITPs within that.

The decision

We have decided to withhold the information you have requested under the following sections of the OIA:

- 9(2)(b)(ii) to protect information where the making available of the information would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information
- 9(2)(f)(iv) to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials
- 9(2)(g)(i) to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any public service agency or organisation in the course of their duty.

We do not believe the need to withhold this information is outweighed by the public interest in its release at this time.

You have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the OIA if you are not happy with this response. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

We may publish our OIA responses, and the information contained in our reply to you on our website. Before publishing we will remove any personal or identifiable information.

Ngā mihi



Gus Gilmore
Tumuaki | Chief Executive