



25 May 2020

M P Ross

By email: fyi-request-12715-26b811b8@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear M P Ross

Official information request

I refer to your requests for information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) dated 27 April 2020.

Each of your requests, and the University's response, is set out below.

- 1) A full financial breakdown of these incurred costs (\$2 million+).

The '\$2 million' referred to relates to the University's operating costs for halls of residence. Information on the cost of accommodation in the University's halls of residence is publicly available on our website. Therefore, information about operating costs indicates the extent to which any of the University's halls of residence achieves a surplus or a loss. This information is commercially sensitive to the University. Therefore, the information requested has been withheld under section 9(2)(i) of the Act on the basis that "*the withholding of the information is necessary to enable (the University) to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities*".

- 2) What will the \$150 to hold a room (that people aren't allowed to be use) be specifically spent on?

The University decided to extend the 100% discount on charges for rooms in its halls of residence that were temporarily vacant until the day students returned to their room. As a result of this, no fee to hold a room was charged.

- 3) Where is this fee listed in students signed tenancy agreements?

See the answer to question 2.

- 4) What is the consequence of a student not paying your hold room fee?

See the answer to question 2.

- 5) How many students are you expecting to pay this fee weekly?

See the answer to question 2.

- 6) By the time you answer this question (Probably late May 2020), how many students have paid this fee, and
 - a. what was the total of these fees received by the University?
 - b. What was this money spent on?

See the answer to question 2.

- 7) How did the university come up/ with calculate the \$150 fee to be \$150?

See the answer to question 2.

- 8) What was the annual gross profit made by Victoria University in 2019?

See the University's Annual Report 2019 on our website here

https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/1817162/annual-report-2019.pdf.

- 9) At the end of 2019, did Victoria University (University and Consolidated) have over \$100 million in Cash and Cash Equivalents, including funds held by controlling trusts?
 - a. If so/if not, what was the figure?

See the University's Annual Report 2019 on our website here

https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/1817162/annual-report-2019.pdf.

- 10) Have you made any employees redundant during the Level 4 Lockdown?
 - a. If so how many?

No employees were made redundant during the Level 4 lockdown.

- 11) Did Victoria University apply for the COVID-19 Wage Subsidy?

The Government has confirmed that tertiary education institutions such as universities, polytechnics, institutes of technology and Wānanga are considered State Sector employers and therefore are not eligible for wage subsidies under the COVID-19 Employer Wage Subsidy Scheme (the Scheme). As a result, Victoria University of Wellington did not apply for wage subsidies under the Scheme. In April 2020, the University wrote to Government asking for the scope of the Scheme to be extended to encompass employees in the Accommodation, Recreation and Early Childhood community services operated by the University. Competing private providers of these kinds of services were able to claim wage subsidies under the Scheme and the different treatment afforded to tertiary education institutions in relation to these ancillary operations creates inequities. To date, the University has no record of a response to its request having been received. The University has continued to pay its employees during the Level 4 lockdown, and at Alert Level 3, including staff in these ancillary operations. Where those staff have been unable to work remotely during the Level 4 and Level 3 restrictions, they have received paid special leave.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of the University's response to question 1. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "GTawharu". The letters are cursive and connected, with a large 'G' and 'T'.

Georgia Tawharu

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