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Ref: OI-23-00875

01 November 2023

Greg Dawson

By email: [fyi-request-24518-fa32bbad@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-24518-fa32bbad@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Tēnā koe Greg

Thank you for your request, received on 25 October 2023, for the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

- Under the OIA, can you please provide urls or copies of documents for any
  - *minuted discussion,*
  - *analysis,*
  - *advice,*
  - *or reporting provided*

*in the period since 2020*

*regarding the number of universities\* required to perform the functions of universities in the New Zealand tertiary sector. \*this OIA relates only to universities and not other tertiary sector institutes that may perform similar functions*

*Please include (if there is any) notes on which institutes might be partially or completely defunded first if the assessed number of needed facilities is less than the currently operating number.*

On 25 October 2023 you confirmed our interpretation of your request to:

- *You are asking if the current eight universities have been assessed as being the right number, not enough, or too many universities for New Zealand?*
- *Following that, you would like to know if the current eight universities have been assessed as too many, then which one will be/is likely to be defunded first?*

The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) has not engaged in any discussion or project since 2020 on the appropriate number of universities needed to operate within New Zealand. Therefore, in accordance with the Official Information Act, I am declining your request under section 18(e) – this information does not exist.



For your information, only the responsible Minister has the power to establish a university, while a resolution by the House of Representatives is needed to disestablish a university. More information on the establishment and disestablishment of universities can be found in sections 268 and 270 of the Education and Training Act 2020.

Given your reference to 'defunding' universities, you may wish to note that the TEC does not provide general operating funding for universities. The TEC allocates funding in accordance with funding determinations issued by the responsible Minister, and in the university sector this funding primarily subsidises the costs of teaching, learning and research activities and programmes. More information on how the TEC funds the tertiary education sector can be found here:

<https://www.tec.govt.nz/funding/funding-and-performance/funding/how-who-what-we-fund/>

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā



Tim Fowler  
Chief Executive  
Tertiary Education Commission