



5 September 2024

Simon O'Neill
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Ref: PMO 065-2024-25

Dear Simon O'Neill

Official Information Act request: Data supporting Prime Minister's comments about Māori literacy

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request, received on 19 August 2024. You requested:

*"In a recent press conference (16 August 2024), you stated that 88% of Maori children at Year 8 level were unable to read.
([https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://youtu.be/wq3MKV1Sghc__;!!Asq5-8xVch3Reg!qhl3G7Cb_QDdp-gUUXmRavzBTnlVvYgi_WeJST8TEJZW5ialZGwyKMaI8706UOGMK4nAAw0qsLCJH5fzu-FN-xliN_UNrXQeXMIPY38JDrTw\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://youtu.be/wq3MKV1Sghc__;!!Asq5-8xVch3Reg!qhl3G7Cb_QDdp-gUUXmRavzBTnlVvYgi_WeJST8TEJZW5ialZGwyKMaI8706UOGMK4nAAw0qsLCJH5fzu-FN-xliN_UNrXQeXMIPY38JDrTw$))
Could you please provide copies of the empirical evidence on which you base that statement?"*


The Prime Minister was in a general media standup when he made this comment. His actual comment was "You think about what we're doing with respect to mathematics, when you have 88% of Māori kids at year eight unable to read, those are the things in the conversations that we've been getting into." He misspoke when he mentioned reading – he was talking about Māori achievement in mathematics.

You can find more information about maths achievement levels in the attachment to the recent "Making it Count" announcement which is on the Beehive website here:
[Government transforms maths education | Beehive.govt.nz](#)

There is also information available on the Education Counts website here:
[Curriculum Insights and Progress Study: Foundational Area - Mathematics 2023 | Education Counts](#)

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

Yours sincerely


Cameron Burrows
Chief of Staff