



16 June 2025

Alex Taylor

By email: [fyi-request-31009-boecc51b@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-31009-boecc51b@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Tēnā koe Alex

### **Official information request regarding equity in research centres**

I refer to your request for information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) dated 18 May 2025:

*“I am writing to request information under the Official Information Act regarding the commitments and actions of the Antarctic Research Centre, Ferrier Research Institute, and Robinson Research Institute related to two important areas: equity for women and their obligations to Te Tiriti o Waitangi within these organizations.*

#### *Equity for Women:*

- a. *I would like to inquire about the representation of women in senior leadership roles and as scientists within each of the research institutes, particularly in comparison to those in entry-level or administrative/support positions.*
- b. *What measures are being taken to promote gender equity in these positions across the institutes?*
- c. *Additionally, please provide information on pay equity for women at each institute, including any existing pay gaps and the steps being taken to address them.*

*I would appreciate it if the results could be broken down by institute for clarity.*

#### *Obligations to Te Tiriti o Waitangi:*

- a. *Please provide details on how each of the mentioned research institutes meets its obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.*
- b. *What specific initiatives or policies are in place to ensure that Māori perspectives and interests are integrated into the research and operations of each institute?*
- c. *How do these institutes engage with Māori communities and stakeholders in their research activities?*
- d. *I would like to inquire about the number of Māori staff and students, as well as the representation of Māori in senior leadership roles and as scientists within each of the research institutes.”*

Research Centres at Te Herenga Waka - Victoria University of Wellington utilise University policies and procedures with regard to meeting their obligations to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and equity for women. The Research Centres are part of the University group and, as such do not usually have stand-alone policies or processes specific to their organisations.

## **Equity for Women**

The University is committed to continuous improvement in gender equity, as with other aspects of equity, diversity, and inclusion. The promotion of gender equity within these institutes is achieved using resources developed for the wider University group.

Utilising resources such as the University's [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework](#), the [Victoria University Wellington Gender Equity Plan](#), and the [Equal Opportunity Guidelines](#), the University, including its Research Centres, aims to enable a vibrant, creative, supportive and inclusive environment that encourages the recruitment, development and retention of a diverse community of talented staff and students.

Information regarding the representation of women in senior leadership roles and as scientists and entry-level or administrative/support positions within the research institutes is attached.

Further information on the University's commitment to an equitable work and study environment is available at <https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/about/governance/equity-diversity-and-inclusion/gender-equity-plan>.

The University had been working with the New Zealand Tertiary Education Union Te Hautū Kahurangi O Aotearoa Incorporated (TEU); the New Zealand Public Service Association Te Pūkenga Here Tangata Mahi Incorporated (PSA); the Tertiary Institutes Allied Staff Association Incorporated (TIASA); and the other seven NZ Universities, about a clerical and administration pay equity claim. In May 2025 the Government passed a series of changes to the Equal Pay Act (1972) that resulted in the discontinuation of this claim. Given this decision, no work was completed regarding pay gaps at the University, including at research centres. Therefore, this aspect of your request is refused in accordance with s18(d) of the Act as the information does not exist.

## **Obligations to Te Tiriti o Waitangi**

As a university, we embrace the Treaty of Waitangi as one of our distinctive qualities. Te Herenga Waka adopted its [Te Tiriti o Waitangi Statute](#) in February 2019. The Tiriti Statute centres around [eight principles](#) that are intended to help the University community, including its Research Centres, give effect to the Tiriti principles in practical and impactful ways and to enable Te Herenga Waka to realise opportunities under Te Tiriti o Waitangi to further advance the University and contribute to the betterment of New Zealand society. The University's [Responsible Research Policy](#) and [Human Ethics Policy](#) requires researchers to ensure that research conforms to the University's Treaty of Waitangi Statute.

Applications and contracts for research undertaken by the Research Centres often include specific clauses around Mātauranga Māori or equity. For example, with proposals to the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment's Endeavour Fund must give effect to the Vision Mātauranga policy, "which aims to unlock the innovation potential of Māori knowledge, resources, and people".

The Royal Society also provides [detailed guidance on incorporating Mātauranga Māori through the Vision Mātauranga policy](#), particularly in the context of research funding like the Marsden Fund. For European funding, the [Horizon Europe Programme Guide](#) outlines clear expectations for equity, diversity, and inclusion in research and innovation.

Te Herenga Waka's Research Centres engage with Māori communities and stakeholders in numerous ways including supporting collaborative research projects with various iwi and hapu, and promoting initiatives such as the [Robinson Research Institute's Tech Bootcamps](#) which aims to open up pathways to STEM careers for Māori and Pasifika students. Specific information regarding how the Research Centres are meeting Te Tiriti obligations in relation to their research is unique to each research project. As such, this information cannot be provided without substantial research or collation. Therefore, this aspect of your request is refused in accordance with s18(f) of the Act.

Information regarding the representation of Maori staff within the research institutes is attached. Information regarding students associated with these Research Centres cannot be made available without substantial research or collation. Therefore, this aspect of your request is refused in accordance with s18(f) of the Act.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of the decisions made regarding this request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://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](mailto:oiarequests@vuw.ac.nz).

Ngā mihi nui

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