



**Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga**
Ministry of Education

Liam Berry

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11 May 2026

Tēnā koe Liam

OIA: GEMS-47675 – Information relating to the school bus transport contract awarded to Go Bus Transport Ltd in the Manawatū–Whanganui region

Thank you for your email of 13 April 2026 to the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) requesting the following information:

I am writing pursuant to the Official Information Act 1982 to request the following information relating to the school bus transport contract awarded to Go Bus Transport Ltd in the Manawatu-Whanganui region.

Contract Details

- 1. A copy of the contract or tender agreement between the Ministry of Education and Go Bus Transport Ltd for the provision of school transport services in the Manawatu-Whanganui region, including the contract term, total contract value, and annual payments.*
- 2. The date on which Go Bus commenced services under this contract, and the scheduled expiry date.*
- 3. The total annual sum payable to Go Bus under the contract for each year of the contract term.*

Service Reductions

- 4. A list of all school bus routes in the Manawatu-Whanganui region that have been discontinued, reduced, or modified since Go Bus assumed the contract, including the date each change took effect.*
- 5. The number of students affected by each route change identified in response to question 4.*
- 6. The total number of students in the Manawatu-Whanganui region who were eligible for and receiving Ministry-funded school transport in the final year of the previous provider's contract (Uzabus/Madge Coachlines), compared with the number currently eligible and receiving Ministry-funded transport under Go Bus.*

Financial Impact

7. *The estimated cost savings, if any, realised by Go Bus as a result of the route reductions and discontinued services identified in response to question 4.*
8. *Whether the Ministry has adjusted (increased or decreased) the payments made to Go Bus following any route reductions or service changes. If so, please provide details of each adjustment, the date it took effect, and the financial value.*
9. *If no adjustment has been made, please confirm whether Go Bus continues to receive the full contract sum originally tendered, notwithstanding the reduction in services.*

Eligibility Policy

10. *Any internal policy documents, guidelines, or directives issued to Ministry staff (including by or to James Meffan or members of the school transport review team) regarding the interpretation or application of the “nearest suitable school” eligibility criterion for school bus entitlement.*
11. *Any correspondence between the Ministry and Go Bus regarding the transport of non-qualifying students on contracted school bus services.*
12. *Any records of the “cartwheel” or inter-school transfer arrangement previously operated in Palmerston North, under which rural students were collected and redistributed to their chosen schools, and any Ministry decision or communication discontinuing this arrangement.*

Previous Provider Comparison

13. *The total annual sum paid to Uzabus (or Madge Coachlines) under the previous Ministry contract for the same region, for each of the final three years of that contract.*
14. *The total number of school bus routes operated under the previous contract in its final year of operation, compared with the number currently operated by Go Bus.*

Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

I am refusing **parts 10, 11 and 12** of your request under section 18(f) of the Act as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research such as would interfere with normal operations. We emailed on 21 April 2026 inviting you to refine your request but have received no response.

The Ministry needs to extend the timeframe for responding to the remainder of your request, pursuant to section 15A(1)(a) of the Act, as the request is for a large quantity of information or necessitates a search through a large quantity of information, and meeting the original time limit would unreasonably interfere with the

operations of the Ministry. You can now expect to receive a response to your request on or before 26 May 2026, which is an extension of 10 working days.

You have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review my decision on your request, in accordance with section 28 of the Act. You can do this by writing to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or to Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Nāku noa, nā



Cindy McDonald
Principal Advisor, Ministerials
Te Pou Rangatōpū | Corporate