



11 APR 2016

Laura Tupou  
[fyi-request-3716-bb2feeee6@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-3716-bb2feeee6@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Ms Laura Tupou

On 4 March 2016 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

1. *How many students, nationally, were receiving some form of student allowance for the 2015 calendar year?*
  - a) *How many of these students had an address in the Auckland region?*
  - b) *Of those from 1a, what was the average weekly amount received?*

The total number of students, nationally, receiving some form of Student Allowance in 2015 was 75,050. Student allowance statistics are reported on the Ministry's website, which is due to be updated for the 2015 calendar year shortly [www.studylink.govt.nz/about-studylink/statistics/](http://www.studylink.govt.nz/about-studylink/statistics/).

I can advise you that 25,067 students who received Student Allowance in 2015 had an address in the Auckland region as at 31 December 2015, however please note that many students return home for their summer study break, and would have changed their address prior to 31 December. This means that not all students with an Auckland address as at 31 December 2015 actually studied in Auckland, and those who did study in Auckland but moved to other regions for their study break would not have been counted.

Student Allowance entitlement can vary from week to week, and ad hoc payments and debt transactions make calculation of the average weekly amount paid unreliable. In order to provide you with this information Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of student records. As such I refuse the second part of your request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

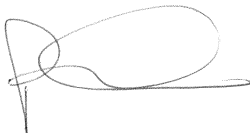
I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

I can advise you that the average amount paid for Student Allowance and Accommodation Benefit in 2015 was \$5,910 nationally (all students), and \$5,893 for students who had an address in Auckland as at 31 December 2015. The median amount paid in the year, nationally and to those in Auckland only, was \$5,943 and \$5,944 respectively. These amounts cannot be used to determine the average weekly amount as course length and payment weeks vary between individuals.

I hope you find this information regarding Student Allowance helpful. You have the right to seek an investigation and review of my response by the Ombudsman, whose address for contact purposes is:

The Ombudsman  
Office of the Ombudsman  
PO Box 10-152  
WELLINGTON 6143

Yours sincerely



 Ruth Bound  
**Deputy Chief Executive  
Service Delivery**