



Ref: OI/19/01212

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29 October 2019

Section 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe S 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your request, received on 9 September 2019 2019, for the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

*Is there any way of telling me the decile breakdown of the fees-free students in 2018 compared with first year tertiary students in the previous years?*

I am releasing the information requested in the attached table. As there is only one year of data available for Fees-free, a comparison has been made with a similar groups of past students (18-19 year olds in 2017). This is due to the fact the majority of Fees-free eligible students are 18 – 19 year olds in their first year of tertiary study, and is a more like for like historic comparison.

Deciles are a measure of the socio-economic position of a school's student community relative to other schools throughout the country. However the Government sees the decile system as a blunt tool for measuring socioeconomic disadvantage using the neighbourhoods that children live in not the circumstances of individual children. A school's decile does not reflect the quality of education the school provides.

For this reason the Government has decided to replace school deciles in 2021 or 2022 by an Equity Index that better aligns equity funding to actual levels of socio-economic disadvantage in our schools.

Care should be taken about drawing any conclusions from the data provided. This is because the TEC only holds information about the decile rating of the school a learner attended for approximately 80 percent of learners. As deciles relate to the overall socio-economic status of the school, it may not reflect the socio-economic status of a particular learner. In addition, not all students in the tertiary education system attended a New Zealand secondary school or may not have specified their last school attended when they enrolled at a tertiary provider.

I am withholding some information in the released documents, in accordance with the provisions of the Act. Redactions are clearly marked in the documents, with reasons for the redactions provided. This includes a small amount of information that has been withheld to protect the privacy of individual learners. I am satisfied, in terms of section 9(1) of the Act, that the need to withhold the information referred to above is not outweighed by other considerations that render it desirable, in the public interest, to make the information available.



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.

The TEC intends to publish its response to this request on our website with your personal details removed. Consistent with the Act, we are publishing responses in the interests of transparency and accountability, and to improve access to official information.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tim Fowler', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tim Fowler  
Chief Executive  
Tertiary Education Commission