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17 July 2020

9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your requests, received on 19 May and 29 May 2020, for the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

19 May 2020:

- 1. Between 2015 and 2020, how many migrants have purchased ESOL tuition under the TEC scheme? How many of them have used their pre-purchased classes? How many of the people who purchased in 2015 are due to have their classes expire in 2020?*
- 2. Has there been any recent research/survey on migrant's experience of pre-purchased ESOL classes since 2016, if not, are there plans to commission one in the near future?*
- 3. How regular are the audits of the institutes delivering these courses? Are there any reports on the most recent audits?*

29 May 2020:

- 1. How is information on PELT enrolment and processes communicated to new migrants currently?*
- 2. How was information on PELT enrolment and processes communicated to new migrants in 2015?*
- 3. When was the ESOL locator tool developed by TEC/INZ to help learners find language schools providing PELT, how many people accessed it in the year it was launched? How many people accessed it in 2019?*
- 4. What actions have been taken by TEC (alone, or collaboratively with INZ) to increase uptake of PELT by migrants who have already purchased the classes?*
- 5. How many language institutes were licenced to provide PELT in 2010?*
- 6. How many language institutes are licenced to provide PELT currently?*

As advised by my staff on 10 June 2020, the TEC transferred three questions to Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) under section 14(b)(ii) of the Act as it is believed the information sought in these questions is the request to be more closely connected with the functions of MBIE. Immigration New Zealand (INZ) is a subsidiary of MBIE. The questions transferred were:

Between 2015 and 2020, how many migrants have purchased ESOL tuition under the TEC scheme? How many of them have used their pre-purchased classes?
When was the ESOL locator tool developed by TEC/INZ to help learners find language schools providing PELT, how many people accessed it in the year it was launched? How many people accessed it in 2019?



On 10 June 2020 MBIE transferred the following question to the TEC, under section 14(b)(ii) of the Act:

When was the latest audit of the language providers delivering these courses, and how many language providers were audited?

On 23 June 2020 you were further advised that the TEC were extending time to make a decision on your request under section 15A(1)(b) of the Act to 17 July 2020. This is because consultations were necessary to make a decision on the request. I appreciate your patience.

Before answering your questions, it may be useful if I explain the background of Pre-purchased English language tuition (PELT). As you may know, some resident visa applicants must pre-purchase English language tuition if they do not meet the minimum English language requirements of the visa they are applying for. This enables partners, dependent children and parents to join family members in New Zealand who have met the English language requirements for New Zealand residence.

The intent of PELT is for migrants who have paid a PELT fee to enrol in English language courses using their entitlement and, within their first five years living in New Zealand, gain the level of English language proficiency necessary to assist them to successfully settle here. Applicants who pay for PELT have five years to use their entitlement before it expires.

INZ collects the PELT fee due from liable resident visa applicants before issuing their resident visa. TEC is then responsible for arranging tuition to be available, advising migrants on where tuition is available, paying for the tuition from the migrant's PELT entitlement, and keeping a record of tuition completed by the migrant.

Please note that, in responding, I have grouped together your audit related questions at the end and responded to them in one response. All your other questions are responded to individually, and in the order asked:

How many of the people who purchased [ESOL tuition under the TEC scheme] in 2015 are due to have their classes expire in 2020?

The total number of PELT entitlements paid in 2015 which are due to expire in the 2020 calendar year is 737 (not used and partly used). This number is calculated from data as at 30 June 2020.¹

Has there been any recent research/survey on migrant's experience of pre-purchased ESOL classes since 2016, if not, are there plans to commission one in the near future?

The TEC has not commissioned any research or surveys of migrants PELT experience. At this current time there are no plans to commission one; however, we will consider this as part of our annual consideration of PELT needs.

¹ The Minister of Education and Minister of Immigration have agreed to extend the expiry date of PELT entitlements current during COVID-19 to ensure these migrants do have the full five years to use their tuition. Entitlements that were due to expire between 1 March 2020 and 30 June 2020 have been extended to 30 December 2020. All other migrants with PELT entitlement current as at 30 June 2020 have been given a 6 month extension of the expiry date of their entitlement. This means that PELT entitlements that were due to expire from 1 July 2020 to 30 December 2020 will now expire in 2021.

How is information on PELT enrolment and processes communicated to new migrants currently?

The INZ website has information for visa applicants on PELT: https://www.immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/apply-for-a-visa/tools-and-information/english-language/learning-english-in-new-zealand?_ga=2.145439284.1255980150.1592191089-1754286633.1559695460

INZ's NZ Now website is an online guide to all aspects of living and working in New Zealand for new and prospective migrants. The English language pages include information on PELT and how to enrol: <https://www.newzealandnow.govt.nz/living-in-nz/english-language/learning-english>

Migrant learners are provided with basic information in their Agreement to Learn English in New Zealand. This agreement directs the learner to make contact with the TEC for further information. The TEC provides information for migrant learners ranging from eligibility to enrolment steps in seven different languages, as well as publishing a directory of PELT providers for learners to review: <https://www.tec.govt.nz/funding/funding-and-performance/funding/fund-finder/pelt/migrant-learners/>

How was information on PELT enrolment and processes communicated to new migrants in 2015?

The same processes were used as noted above with the following exceptions:

NZ Now website: Information on locating English language courses was launched in 2017 and was added to the NZ Now website thereafter; and

TEC website: Information was not translated on the TEC website in 2015 but I can advise that from January 2016, information for migrant learners on the TEC website was translated into traditional Chinese, simplified Chinese, Korean, and Hindi.

What actions have been taken by TEC (alone, or collaboratively with INZ) to increase uptake of PELT by migrants who have already purchased the classes?

The new online English language course information tool went live in September 2017. The interactive tool provides migrants and other information providers such as Citizens' Advice Bureau staff with information and contact details for English language course providers near them that best meet their needs. Users can filter their search results by location, full-time or part-time, and whether or not they pre-purchased their tuition when applying for their NZ visa. The tool utilises an interactive map to identify a suitable course near to the migrant: <https://www.newzealandnow.govt.nz/live-in-new-zealand/english-language/find-an-english-language-class>

Where TEC has the contact details of the learner we send annual reminders of their balance and expiry dates encouraging them to make contact with us to support their enrolment. The TEC works with key migrant groups to advertise and establish connections. We have advertised the uptake of PELT through New Zealand based Chinese newspapers and television channels. We continue to partner with INZ on PELT issues, and are progressing a joint agency communication plan for 2020/21.

How many language institutes were licenced to provide PELT in 2010?

I can advise that in May 2010, the TEC had 68 agreements with providers to deliver PELT.

How many language institutes are licenced to provide PELT currently?

As of 10 June 2020, the TEC has current agreements with 55 PELT providers.

How regular are the audits of the institutes delivering these courses?

Are there any reports on the most recent audits?

When was the latest audit of the language providers delivering these courses, and how many language providers were audited?

The TEC administers PELT on behalf of Immigration New Zealand and does not specifically audit PELT provision. However, 29 of 64² PELT providers have been audited by the TEC since 2014 as they also receive other TEC funding. Audits on PELT provision are undertaken on an incidental basis. Nine of the 64 PELT providers were audited in the 2019 calendar year. The TEC does not publish audit reports, as their primary audience is the provider that has been audited.

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 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



Tim Fowler
Chief Executive
Tertiary Education Commission

² There were up to 64 PELT providers between 2017 and 2020. As noted above, as of 10 June 2020 there are now only 55 with current agreements to provide PELT.