



Te Pūkenga

Level 2, Wintec House
Cnr Anglesea and Nisbet St.
Hamilton 3204

0800 86 22 84
info@tepūkenga.ac.nz
tepūkenga.ac.nz

18 August 2025

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
By email: [Redacted]

Tēnā koe [Redacted]

Request under the Official Information Act 1982

Thank you for your email of 23 July 2025, requesting information from Te Pūkenga – New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (Te Pūkenga), and the copy of the Education and Workforce Committee's July 2025 report '2025/26 Estimates for Vote Education' that you attached.

Referencing page 4 of that document, you asked for the following:

I'm getting in touch to please request, under the Official Information Act, the directive to Te Pūkenga in May to obtain specialist support, as stated on page four of the attached pdf. Please include a copy of this directive, including where it came from and the exact wording, the cost of said support, and what Te Pūkenga's [sic] response to the support was.

In addition, please provide details behind the fact that this has "resulted in a reduced number of programmes offered, closure of delivery sites, property disposal, and staffing reductions".

Separately, please provide copies of all-staff communication regarding the polytechnic merger Te Pūkenga being split back up into polytechs, and any meeting notes and communications with the relevant Minister and Te Pūkenga's [sic] senior leadership in this case.

For ease of reference, we quote the second paragraph from page 4 of that document below, as you refer to in your queries:

We heard that the TEC has required Te Pūkenga | New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (Te Pūkenga) to improve its financial performance in the past year and directed that it obtain specialist support in May 2025. This has resulted in a reduced number of programmes offered, closure of delivery sites, property disposal, and staffing reductions.

Please note we believe that the May 2025 date is a typo and should read May 2024. We also note that this letter was sent to Te Pūkenga in June 2024. With this taken into account, this letter provides a formal decision on your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

The decision

Within our previous letter to you, dated 20 May 2025 (reference TP250037), we explained that on 14 June 2024, Te Pūkenga was directed by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) to obtain specialist support to review and improve the viability of our 16 provider-based business divisions – former Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs).

As stated in that letter, there is a large quantity of information already available on our website. Therefore, we are refusing parts of your request under section 18(d) of the OIA as the information is already publicly available. However, we provide links and other information as set out below.

The TEC directive was contained in a letter that is publicly available and can be viewed at:

www.tepukenga.ac.nz/assets/Publications/2024.06.14-Notice-requiring-Te-Pukenga-to-obtain-specialist-help.pdf

Te Pūkenga Council response to this directive, can be viewed at:

www.tepukenga.ac.nz/assets/Publications/20240626-Letter-to-TEC-re-requirement-for-Te-Pukenga-to-obtain-specialist-help.pdf

TEC's follow up letter setting out the organisations each of our ITP business divisions was assigned to, can be viewed at:

www.tepukenga.ac.nz/assets/Publications/2024.07.09-Letter-to-Sue-McCormack-Te-Pukenga-re-specialist-help.pdf

Within our May letter to you we provided several links to previous OIA responses, one of which included fuller details of the work of the consultants, outlining the culmination of their work - known as the Regional ITP Viability (RIV) programme - into comprehensive financial viability and improvement reports for each division, which Te Pūkenga Council considered in January 2025.

As outlined in that OIA response, these reports provided an overview of how each ITP division could become a viable, stand-alone entity, or how it might minimise financial losses and operate as part of a federation or merger, for example.

As these reports were completed late last year, we have interpreted and scoped your query regarding the cost of this work to be as at the end of last year. The total 2024 spend on consultants for the RIV programme was \$3,840,628.39 (GST exclusive). This amount includes both consultancy fees and consultants' travel/disbursements.

As further described in our May letter to you and the same OIA response, business divisions began some right-sizing work during 2024, which is continuing through 2025. The work undertaken by the consultants helped inform possible areas that could be reviewed at each business division, as they looked at ways to improve their financial position. The reports were not definitive in their options, final decisions around what would be consulted on followed a sign off process and a set of principles. In deciding on change, business divisions carefully considered a range of matters to support improving their financial position. These matters then informed rationale within individual change proposals. For several divisions this has resulted in a *"reduced number of programmes offered, closure of delivery sites, property disposal, and staffing reductions"*.

As set out in our previous letter, business division changes are part of our wider response to the directive from Government that we take action to improve the financial performance and viability of our whole network. We refer to the link we provided to the letter from the Minister clarifying aspects of her Letter of Expectations for Te Pūkenga.

We have interpreted the last part of your request to be in relation to the Minister for Vocational Education, Hon Penny Simmonds, 14 July 2025 announcement:

www.beehive.govt.nz/release/regional-governance-will-return-ten-polytechnics.

One email is within scope of your request for *“all-staff communication regarding the polytechnic merger Te Pūkenga being split back up into polytechs”*. It was sent by me to all Te Pūkenga kaimahi via Ngā Taipitopito, our internal newsletter, on Monday 14 July 2025, titled: *Ngā Taipitopito / Minister's announcement regarding ITPs*.

A copy of the text from that email is attached at **Appendix One**. Specific name and details of Te Pūkenga kaimahi, aside from myself, have been withheld as they are outside the scope of your query and with reliance on section 9(2)(a) of the OIA to protect the privacy of natural persons. We do not believe the need to withhold this information is outweighed by the public interest in its release.

In regard to your request for *“any meeting notes and communications with the relevant Minister ... in this case”*, I can advise that Sue McCormack, Acting Chair of Te Pūkenga Council, and I had an online meeting with the Minister at 1:00pm, 14 July 2025. The purpose of the meeting was for the Minister to brief us ahead of the formal announcement later that day. No notes were taken during the meeting, nor is there any further communication regarding her announcement on that date within scope of your request, therefore, we must refuse this part of your request under section 18(e) of the OIA as *“the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist”*.

You have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the OIA if you are not happy with this response. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

We may publish our OIA responses and the information contained in our reply to you on our website. Before publishing we will remove any personal or identifiable information.

Ngā mihi

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Gus Gilmore', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Gus Gilmore
Tumuaki | Chief Executive

From: Gus Gilmore

Sent: Monday, 14 July 2025 4:08 pm

Subject: Ngā Taipitopito | Minister's announcement regarding ITPs

Nau mai ki te putanga hou o Ngā Taipitopito Welcome to our latest edition of Ngā Taipitopito

Tēnā koutou

The Prime Minister Christopher Luxon and Minister for Vocational Education Penny Simmonds today announced significant Government plans for the future of Vocational Education and Training, with particular focus on the future of institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITPs).

The decision includes clarity on which ITPs will be stood up early in the new year, including details of mergers and independent but federated entities, as well as which ITP divisions will remain within Te Pūkenga in 2026 until they are ready to stand alone.

No doubt you will have many questions about the details of this announcement, including how the federation will operate. I will be working with Business Division Leaders as well as other Government agencies on the details and keep you updated as we know more.

You can read the Minister's announcement here: [Regional governance for 10 polytechnics](#)

Today's announcement brings more clarity to ākonga and kaimahi after a prolonged period of uncertainty for the sector. While it provides a clearer direction on the future for ITPs, there is still much mahi to undertake on transition plans for all business divisions. We are working closely with the Tertiary Education Commission on these.

We are in a strong position to make this transition thanks to our continued focus on improving the financial viability of all divisions and the devolving of more responsibility to divisions. I thank you for your part in making this happen.

You should be very proud that throughout all of this, you have continued to deliver quality vocational education and training and meet the unique needs of regions and communities throughout the motu. I appreciate this hasn't been easy amidst significant change and uncertainty.

With more clarity on the Government's direction for our future, ELT is continuing to look at the composition of the National Office going forward. Out of Scope, s 9(2)(a)

For now, I encourage you to continue to remain focused on our learners and supporting them and each other as we look at operationalising the changes the Government has announced.

Nā tō rourou, nāku te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi

With your food basket and my food basket, the people will thrive.

Ngā mihi nui

Gus Gilmore

Tumuaki | Chief Executive