

26/04/2024

Kia ora 

OIA: 1323736 – Advice provided to the Minister regarding Public Private Partnerships to deliver school property

Thank you for your email of 27 February 2024 to the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) requesting the following information:

- 1. What advice has been provided to the minister on public private partnerships to deliver school property?*
- 2. How many classrooms built in the past twelve months were modular or bespoke? What was the average cost to build a classroom in the last financial year?*
- 3. What is the longest period of time from when a classroom build business case is approved until build is complete?*

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

Regarding the **first part** of your request, I can advise that in January 2024 the Minister requested advice regarding the future use of Public Private Partnerships (PPP) within the delivery and management of school property. The Minister has also commissioned a Ministerial Inquiry in the Ministry's School Property Function. The Inquiry is expected to consider all possible delivery options, including PPPs.

No written advice has been provided to date. However, there was a presentation to the Minister in December 2023. Although PPPs were not a key focus of the overall presentation, it did include a slide regarding PPPs. I am providing you with a copy of this slide as **Appendix A**. There was no verbal advice outside of that presented in the slide.

Substantial advice on future PPP options is expected to be considered as part of, or following, the Inquiry.

Regarding the **second part** of your request, I am providing you with the following two tables.

Modular classrooms are used by the Ministry to deliver new teaching spaces. These classrooms are constructed off-site and to a high standard using a repeatable design. The Ministry tracks the use of modular classrooms but does not track a specific category of 'bespoke' with such classrooms being captured in the 'other' category. Therefore, we are unable to include 'bespoke' in the breakdown and this part of your request is refused under section 18(g) of the Act as the information is not currently held by the Ministry.

We would expect the majority of the projects counted as 'other' in table 1 would be bespoke designs but are unable to separate bespoke from other options such as repeatable designs or transportable solutions. We also do not currently have a standard design other than our modular solutions, however work is underway on a standard design and, the process for recording what design option has been undertaken on a project is in progress to be implemented going forward.

The average cost has been calculated by taking the total project spend from the relevant growth funding source divided by the number of teaching spaces added. The amount spent can include non-teaching space areas, infrastructure and site works, which do not relate to the cost of building the classroom itself, but are required as part of the project to add classrooms at the school.

The average cost to build a classroom in the last financial year has been calculated by taking the total project spend from the relevant growth funding source divided by the number of teaching spaces added. The amount spent can include non-teaching space areas, infrastructure and site works, which do not relate to the cost of building the classroom itself, but are required as part of the project to add classrooms at the school.

Table 1 – Classrooms built from 1 February 2023 – 31 January 2024

Modular	Other	Total	Average Cost (FY 23/24)
127	285	412	\$909,719.86

These figures have been extracted from the National Education Growth Plan reporting and therefore only include classrooms built that have added to the number of classrooms at a school. A few variables have been excluded from this dataset, as set out in table 2 below.

Table 2 – Caveats

Exclusions	Justification
Classrooms built through redevelopment projects.	Redevelopment projects are not tracked in the same way as growth projects and attempting to collate this information would require substantial research. Therefore, insofar as your request is seeking classrooms built as part of a redevelopment project, it is refused pursuant to section 18(f), that the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

Exclusions	Justification
Projects which showed less than \$500K or more than \$2M as the cost per teaching space.	Projects less than \$500k are likely to have been delivered through an alternative solution, rather than a new classroom build and therefore out of scope. Projects over \$2M as these have been confirmed to have had a large amount of non-teaching space costs and therefore is not an accurate representation for the scope of the question.
Transportable / Relocatable / Refurbishment / Repurposing of existing space / PPP.	Projects where classrooms have been added to the school via the use of transportable classrooms, relocatable classrooms, refurbishment or repurposing of existing space have been excluded, as these projects have not built new classrooms.

Regarding the **third part** of your request, I can advise that the longest period of time found in our database was 7 years, 3 months and 14 days. This project had a business case approved in August 2016, with construction completed in December 2023. The project was a combined redevelopment and roll growth project, which added seven roll growth classrooms and replaced eight existing teaching spaces.

Please note that for this project, the business case was approved before the Master planning or design work had taken place, resulting in a longer timeframe. The Ministry has since changed the business case process, where a first business case is written and approved after Master planning, and a second business case is approved after design, if needed. As a result, more recent projects have, in general, shorter timeframes from the business case approval to when construction is completed.

Please note, we may publish this response on our website from the following working day. Your name and contact details will be removed.

Thank you again for your email. 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



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