



24/09/2025



**OIA: 1352736 – \$120 million project for 137 new classrooms in Auckland**

Thank you for your email of 27 August 2025 to the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) requesting the following information:

- 1. Clarification on when a detailed cost breakdown (including construction, land acquisition, design fees, and contingency funds) and exact classroom sizes will be available to the public.*
- 2. Any non-commercially sensitive information available at this stage, such as typical classroom size ranges used in Ministry projects or general budget categories (e.g., percentage allocated to construction vs. other costs).*
- 3. A specific explanation of how releasing this information would unreasonably prejudice the commercial position of parties involved, to justify the withholding under section 9(2)(b)(ii).*
- 4. Given the public's strong interest in ensuring efficient use of taxpayer funds, especially for a \$120 million project, I believe greater transparency is warranted. The press release provided (<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/120-million-auckland-school-property-growth-plan>) lists only the number of classrooms per school, which does not address my request for cost breakdowns or classroom sizes.*

*Please provide a response within 20 working days, as per OIA guidelines. You can contact me at [REDACTED] for any clarification. I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to a more detailed response to support public trust in this project.*

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

Regarding **part one** of your request, the project is subject to active negotiations and a timeframe cannot be publicly confirmed at this time, in accordance with section 9(2)(j) of the Act, as the withholding of this information is necessary to enable the Ministry to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial or industrial).



In response to **parts two and three** of your requests, the information contained in the press release is the most detail that can be provided at this time, apart from classroom sizes. The Ministry is out to tender on projects and any competitive edge to ensure public funds are used efficiently would be lost if a budgeted figure was to be disclosed.

Therefore, the Ministry considers any disclosure would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information (i.e., being considered by the Ministry). Furthermore, as with **part one** of your request, withholding the information is necessary to enable the Ministry to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial or industrial), as per section 9(2)(j) of the Act.

I am therefore refusing **parts two and three** of your request under section 9(2)(j) of the Act, as above, and to enable the Ministry to undertake negotiations without premature public scrutiny. I acknowledge that section 9(2)(j) of the Act should have been applied to your previous request, and I apologise for that omission.

Regarding classroom sizes, a typical classroom size range is between 65 and 105 square meters, dependent on the function that they are supporting.

It's also worth noting that while we have refused your request to the extent information is held, the Ministry does not hold a detailed breakdown to the level you have request, as the details are only budgeted for/forecasted, until a contract is awarded. Please also note that we would refuse the release of detailed information on pricing post tender as the information would be commercial in confidence. Release of the information would erode the Ministry's future negotiation position and unfairly prejudice suppliers whose competitive bids would be in the public domain, as per section 9(2)(j) of the Act. The Ministry did consider whether section 18(g) of the Act is relevant to your request given no such detailed cost breakdown is held but ultimately determined that because the project has gone out to tender and some information in the form of forecasts exists, section 9(2)(j) of the Act is more appropriate.

As required under section 9(1) of the Act, I have considered the public interest in releasing the information withheld. I do not consider that the public interest considerations favouring the release of this information are sufficient to outweigh the need to withhold it at this time.

Regarding **part four** of your request, the press release provides a breakdown of the number of classrooms per school, to which an average cost can be calculated. The Minister of Education has referenced the cost of classroom delivery as falling from \$1.2 million per teaching space to \$620,000. More generally speaking, construction costs are generally broken down into high-level building estimated costs and then Trade Elements.

High-level building estimated costs, based on preliminary designs can be broken down into the following categories:

- Enabling works
- Substructure
- Structure
- Enclosure
- Building Services
- Fitout
- Sums

Once the design has developed with sufficient detailing (Detailed Design/Consented Design) the budget/cost can be broken down into the Trade Elements as below, in line with Australian and New Zealand Standard Method of Measurement:

- Enabling
- Demolition
- Groundworks
- Piling
- Concrete – Cast In-Situ
- Formwork
- Reinforcement
- Prestressing
- Precast Concrete
- Tanking/DPM
- Masonry/Stonework
- Structural Steelwork
- Metalwork
- Roofing
- Façade Systems
- Windows
- Glazing
- Carpentry & Framing
- Partitions
- Suspended Ceilings
- Access Floors (Proprietary)
- Doors
- Hardware
- Applied Finishes
- Floor Finishes
- Painting
- Joinery
- FFE – Furniture, Fittings and Equipment
- Hydraulics – Plumbing & Sanitaryware
- Electrical Services
- Mechanical Services
- Transportation – Lifts
- Fire Services
- Provisional Sums
- Sitewo

Please note, we may publish this response on our website after five working days. 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](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz) or to Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Nāku noa, nā



Jerome Sheppard  
Chief Executive  
**School Property**