

11 September 2026

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request made under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), received on 27 August 2026. You requested the following:

... I request the following information that is not already publicly available:

- 1. The date Inland Revenue was first informed that the Government would end the final-year Fees Free scheme.*
- 2. Any advice, briefings or internal reports provided to the Commissioner of Inland Revenue or the Minister of Revenue between 1 May 2026 and 30 June 2026 concerning whether to continue, pause or stop paid Fees Free advertising after the Government announced the scheme would end.*
- 3. A breakdown of Inland Revenue's Fees Free advertising expenditure from 1 May 2026, showing amounts spent before and after 28 May 2026, by channel (including Google Ads, Meta, Go Media and TVNZ).*

Fees free advertising activity

The Tertiary Education Commission transfers learner eligibility information, such as learner completion dates, three times a year to Inland Revenue which is used to confirm a learner's eligibility for Final Year Fees Free. Advertising activity was planned to run in-line with the first date of these transfers to remind learners to check their eligibility and to apply for their Final Year Fees Free entitlement.

The learner eligibility information transfer date, for learners completing their study between 1 January to 11 April 2026, was 29 April 2026. Accordingly, the advertising campaign was pre-planned to align with this transfer, starting on 4 May and running through to 29 June 2026. The plans and objectives for this advertising campaign were not impacted by the reported changes to future fees free eligibility as this campaign targeted learners who were already eligible to receive entitlements.

Staff working on Budget initiatives became aware on 7 May of the Government's intentions regarding fees free.

No advice, briefings or reports to the Commissioner of Inland Revenue or the Minister of Revenue were identified that relate to this advertising campaign during 1 May to 30 June 2026 (inclusive). Therefore, this part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the OIA as the documents alleged to contain the information requested do not exist.

The advertising expenditure in the table below covers advertising through Google ads, Meta, Go Media (outdoor digital billboards), and TVNZ for the 4 May – 29 June 2026 advertising campaign. Invoices are received on a monthly basis in-arrears for the whole month. The invoices for this advertising campaign were received after 28 May 2026 totalling \$42,973.08 (excluding GST).

Advertising channel	May 2026 invoice	June 2026 invoice
Google	\$5,903.00	\$1,070.00
Meta	\$4,736.08	\$1,264.00
Go Media (digital billboards)	\$25,000.00	-
TVNZ	\$5,000.00	-
Total (excl GST)	\$40,639.08	\$2,334.00

Right of review

If you disagree with my decision on your OIA request, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the OIA. You can contact the office of the Ombudsman by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Publishing of OIA response

We intend to publish our response to your request on Inland Revenue's website (ird.govt.nz) as this information may be of interest to other members of the public. This letter, with your personal details removed, may be published in its entirety. Publishing responses increases the availability of information to the public and is consistent with the OIA's purpose of enabling more effective participation in the making and administration of laws and policies and promoting the accountability of officials.

Thank you again for your request.

Yours sincerely



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