



11 August 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 22 May 2025 requesting all information relating to the Growing Up in New Zealand (GUINZ) study contract. Thank you for your email of 29 May refining your request to be for all advice to Ministers relating to the mentioned reductions and efficiencies.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on your request set out below.

Please find attached the following documents in scope of your request:

- REP/24/4/381 - *Options to progress contract negotiations for the Growing Up in New Zealand study* – dated 3 May 2024
- Excerpt from the Social Development and Employment Update (SDEU) – dated 5 July 2024

Please note that only the section of the SDEU relating to your request has been included in this response. The remaining content is considered as out of scope of your request as it is not related to the GUINZ study.

Some information is withheld under section 9(2)(b)(ii) of the Act as, if released, it would be likely to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information. The greater public interest is in ensuring that the commercial position can be maintained.

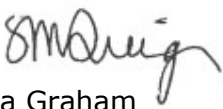
I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with my decision on your request, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to

make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

pp. 

Anna Graham

General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services

Report



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

Date: 03 May 2024

Security Level: COMMERCIALY
SENSITIVE

To: Hon Louise Upston, Minister for Social Development and
Employment

Options to progress contract negotiations for the Growing Up in New Zealand study

REP/24/4/381

Purpose of the report

- 1 This report provides advice on the two options proposed by the University of Auckland to continue the Growing Up in New Zealand (GUINZ) longitudinal study and seeks your agreement to parameters for MSD's negotiation strategy with the University.

Executive summary

- 2 On 3 April 2024 the University of Auckland wrote to you and proposed two high-level options for your consideration for the next contract to continue the GUINZ study. The University provided only limited detail on the scope of these options.
- 3 At the MSD Officials' meeting on 8 April 2024, you indicated funding for the study would continue on the basis that:
 - 3.1 additional Government funding will be contingent on the University of Auckland meeting key milestones towards successful linkage of the data to the IDI, and
 - 3.2 the University of Auckland must obtain alternative funding to ensure the Government is not the sole funder of the study.
- 4 We have started engaging with the University of Auckland to understand the details of the two options they provided. Importantly, we are aware that

neither option included cost estimates for IDI linkage. Further, one of the options (Option 2) proposed a shorter contract term, which would require Cabinet approval.

- 5 Following your discussion with Professor Gluckman, you asked for advice on including an independent review to assess whether the research is leading to interventions that impact and improve outcomes for New Zealanders. We propose building this into the contract to occur in 2025, after the Year-14 Checkpoint. This would enable MSD to exit the contract if GUINZ does not meet agreed objectives including IDI linkage and securing other funders.

Recommended actions

It is recommended that you:

- 1 **note** that the leadership and management of GUINZ has transferred to the University of Auckland's Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences. Any future contract negotiations will be between MSD and the University of Auckland
- 2 **note** you received a letter from the University of Auckland proposing two options for future funding of the study. While only limited detail on the scope of these options was provided, changing the term of the contract as proposed in Option 2 would require Cabinet approval
- 3 **agree** to the parameters for negotiating the contract with the University of Auckland for the GUINZ study:
 - pursue the most cost-effective way to achieve the aims of the study and maximise the value of the study for Government
 - additional Government funding be contingent on the University of Auckland meeting key milestones towards successful linkage of the data to the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI), and
 - the University of Auckland must obtain alternative funding to ensure the Government is not the sole funder of the study
 - an independent review with specified objectives and targets and provisions to exit contact if they are not met
- 4 **note** that MSD will provide you with a letter in response to the University of Auckland setting out your expectations of a new contract

Agree/Disagree

5 **note** that MSD will report back to you on contract negotiations



Sacha O'Dea
Deputy Chief Executive
Strategy and Insights

3/5/24

Date



Hon Louise Upston
Minister for Social Development and
Employment

20240507

Date

Background

- 6 MSD provided you with advice on the Growing Up in New Zealand (GUINZ) longitudinal study in January 2024 [REP/24/1/020 refers].
- 7 The paper outlined that \$30 million in funding was approved through Budget 2023 for the future delivery of GUINZ between 2023/2024 and 2026/2027, and that the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) extended the existing contract with UniServices from October 2023 to February 2024 at a cost s9(2)(b)(ii) from the Budget 2023 funding.
- 8 In February 2024, UniServices advised MSD that they had communicated to their staff, the University of Auckland research team and s9(2)(b)(ii) that there is an indefinite delay to the Study, particularly with respect to the Year-14 Checkpoint data collection wave which is outsourced to s9(2)(b)(ii) and was scheduled to begin on 26 February 2024.
- 9 In April 2024, the University of Auckland advised you that they had taken the decision to transfer the leadership and management of GUINZ to the University of Auckland's Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences. The University proposed two high-level options for your consideration. This paper provides advice about those options and seeks your agreement on MSD's negotiation strategy with the University.

The University of Auckland has proposed two options

- 10 The University of Auckland wrote to you on 3 April 2024 with two high-level investment options for continuing with the GUINZ study:
 - **Option 1:** s9(2)(b)(ii) (1 June 2024 to 28 February 2028): This option will fund two data collection waves; the first when the cohort is approximately 14-15 years old, and the second when they are 16-17-years old. It will also provide ongoing access to the GUINZ datasets by interested researchers and policymakers, longitudinal research and analytics expertise for policymakers, and maintenance activities with the cohort participants.
 - **Option 2:** s9(2)(b)(ii) (1 June 2024 to 30 May 2026): This option will fund the data access, longitudinal expertise and cohort maintenance activities described under Option 1. However, only one data collection wave will be conducted when the cohort is 14-15 years old. This option leverages work completed as part of the bridge funding agreement between (1 July 2023 to 29 February 2024).
- 11 At a high level, Option 1 is consistent with the Budget 23 Cabinet decision to fund the GUINZ study for four years to undertake two data collection waves and progress cohort engagement and restoration activities. The University of Auckland's cost estimate is lower than previous estimates from UniServices, which may offer savings on the Government's B23 funding commitments.

- 12 Option 2 proposes only one data wave collection and is unlikely to deliver the key milestones towards successful linkage of the data to the IDI or allow the time needed for cohort engagement and restoration. Further, a shorter contract period would make it more challenging to get agreement and would mean further negotiation within a short time of signing a new contract. Progressing Option 2 would require Cabinet approval as it proposes a shorter contract term, which is inconsistent with the Budget 2023 Cabinet decision.
- 13 On 9 April 2024, MSD met with representatives of UniServices and the University of Auckland to discuss the scope of the high-level proposals.
- 14 MSD has since confirmed that the Option 1 proposal is very similar in scope to what previously had been negotiated with UniServices. Excluded from the University's Option 1 are costs associated with IDI data linkage and any exit services, such as the cost to maintain a data platform.

Parameters for negotiating a new contract for GUINZ

- 15 At the Officials' meeting on Monday 8 April, we heard the following negotiating parameters for the GUINZ study:
 - MSD should pursue the most cost-effective way to achieve the aims of the study and maximise the value of the study for Government
 - additional Government funding will be contingent on the University of Auckland meeting key milestones towards successful linkage of the data to the IDI, and
 - the University of Auckland must obtain alternative funding to ensure the Government is not the sole funder of the study.
- 16 We propose a negotiation strategy that aligns to your parameters. We intend to negotiate the best price for the agreed deliverables, including IDI linkage and a requirement that the University secures non-Government funding.
- 17 The University's Option 1 provides a greater opportunity than Option 2 to meet this objective:
 - 17.1 The estimated cost of Option 1 is lower than previous estimates from UniServices and offers better value for money. Option 2 is lower than Option 1, but it may be more difficult to get agreement to a shorter contract term, is less likely to deliver on your objectives and does not meet the original Cabinet requirements.
 - 17.2 Option 1 excludes the cost of IDI linkage and exit services. The IDI linkage work is still to be scoped but discussions have been initiated. Issues to resolve with the University include consenting processes, data management, and IDI linkage. The cost and time needed for IDI linkage is to be determined. Exit services to be negotiated include the

ongoing operation and maintenance of GUINZ data at the conclusion of the contract.

We will propose that an independent review after the Year-14 Checkpoint be included in the contract

- 18 Following your discussion with Professor Gluckman, you asked for advice on including an independent review to assess whether the research is leading to interventions that impact and improve outcomes for New Zealanders. MSD proposes to include in the contract a provision for an independent review to assess whether the study is meeting the parameters outlined above. The review would take place after one year but before the end of 2025.
- 19 A review at this stage of the contract would enable MSD to exit the contract if GUINZ does not meet agreed objectives including IDI linkage and securing other funders. Specifically, the review could include the following aspects to support a decision about future funding:
 - Progress against the deliverables to link GUINZ data in the IDI
 - The extent that non-Government funding is contributing to the study costs
 - An assessment of the completion rates (cohort retention) at the Year-14 Checkpoint and the statistical viability of the study ahead of the Year-16 data collection wave.
- 20 The contract could need to be structured to allow a lead in time for the University to secure alternative funding. An independent review after 12 months should allow a sufficient lead in time.

Next steps

- 21 We will provide you with a draft response to the University of Auckland's letter that outlines our expectations for negotiations.
- 22 We will provide you with updates as the negotiations progress.

Author: (Paul Merwood, General Manager Research and Evaluation, Strategy and Insights)

Responsible manager: (Fleur McLaren, Group General Manager, Strategy and Insights)

Contract negotiations are completed for the next phases of the Growing Up in New Zealand (GUiNZ) longitudinal study

Lead: Paul Merwood, General Manager Research and Evaluation

In May 2024, you agreed to progress contract negotiations with the University of Auckland to deliver the next phases of the Growing Up in New Zealand Longitudinal study (GUiNZ). You agreed to the following parameters for the negotiations:

- pursue the most cost-effective way to achieve the aims of the study and maximise the value of the study for Government
- additional Government funding is contingent on the University of Auckland meeting key milestones towards successful linkage of the data to the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI)
- the University of Auckland must obtain alternative funding to ensure the Government is not the sole funder of the study
- an independent review with specified objectives and targets and provisions to exit the contract if they are not met.

We have now completed negotiations with the University and the contract is going through parallel approval processes at MSD and the University. We expect this process to be finished in the next two weeks.

All of the desired parameters have been included in the final contract and will result in a saving of approximately \$6.8m against the Budget 23 funding (exact amount to be confirmed post year end results). This includes:

- IDI linkage
- the University securing alternate funding (at least 15%, with a requirement of at least 5% from non-government sources)
- an independent review with off-ramps if key objectives and targets are not met, including IDI linkage, securing alternative sources of funding, and cohort retention targets.

We will be seeking agreement to rephase funding for GUiNZ including returning savings as part of advice to you and the Minister of Finance to seek agreement to decisions, that were delegated as part of the Budget 24 Cabinet paper.

Responsible DCE: Sacha O'Dea, Deputy Chief Executive, Strategy and Insights