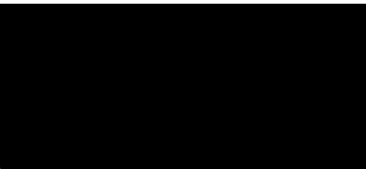


30 January 2020



Dear 

Official Information Act Request

Thank you for your request of 14 January 2020, under the Official Information Act 1982, for the following information:

- *The quantity of flow wrap used for the packaging of exam books used in the 2019 NCEA exams, preferably described using metric units such as kg of plastic, or metres of flow wrap*
- *The quantity of flow wrap returned to NZQA for recycling, preferably described in metric units such as kg of plastic (alternatively measured in boxes with an estimate of how much plastic would be in each box)*
- *The quantity of flow wrap that was actually recycled, preferably described in metric units such as kg of plastic*
- *What this flow wrap was actually recycled into, NOT what you intended it to be recycled into*
- *What you have determined happened to the flow wrap that was not returned to NZQA, or that was returned but was not recycled*
- *What steps you are taking for future years to reduce the amount of flow wrap that does not end up being recycled*

The total amount of flow-wrap material despatched was 2,409 kilograms (based on 587,589 flow-wrapped candidate sets).

The total flow-wrap currently being returned for recycling is 1331 kilograms (which equates to 324,634 wraps returned). The total amount of flow-wrap returned via unused digital and absent sets which has not yet been processed for recycling is 354 kilograms (86,395 sets). Taking both the returned flow-wrap and the unused digital/absent sets still on site, based on the wrap sent out, that equates to a 70% return rate for recycling.

Returned flow-wrap will initially be converted into granular material to be held as a raw material for re-extrusion into other packaging materials. This granular material will be used progressively to develop items such as council rubbish bags, coffee dumpers for the coffee industry, or industrial wrap for the timber industry. NZQA has consulted our printing vendor who was responsible for collecting and despatching the flow-wrap to the manufacturing company for recycling. The printing vendor has informed us that it is too early in the process to know exactly what the plastic returned to the manufacturing company has been converted into.

Data has not been collected from examination centres about exactly what has been done with the 30% of flow-wrap originally despatched that was not returned for recycling. Examination Centre

Managers (ECMs) have informed NZQA that it was either taken to local supermarket-based recycling stations, composted in school compost sites (the plastic used is degradable under controlled conditions) or passed on to schools with unused examination sets (buffer packs) for use by their teachers.

Previously NZQA has relied on ECMs to dispose of examination material appropriately, such as taking flow wrap to local recyclers or adding it to school compost sites. This was the first year that NZQA has used the process of returning plastic flow-wrap to the manufacturing company for recycling. It is likely the process will be used again in future years, with enhancements to the return instructions provided for ECMs to ensure they return all plastic flow-wrap whether an examination set has been used or not. NZQA will also investigate whether it should continue to allow ECMs to take flow-wrap to local recyclers or to add it to school compost sites.

As part of the commitment to open and transparent government, NZQA is proactively releasing responses to Official Information Act requests which are of public interest. NZQA will be publishing its response to your request on its website in March 2020. Your name and contact details will be removed before publication.

If you require further assistance or believe we have misinterpreted your request, please contact [REDACTED] in the Office of the Chief Executive, email [REDACTED]@nzqa.govt.nz or telephone (04) 463 [REDACTED]

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you have the right, under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act 1982, to lodge a complaint with the Office of the Ombudsman at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz. You can also telephone 0800 802 502 or write to the Ombudsman at PO Box 10152, Wellington, 6143.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Karen Poutasi'.

Karen Poutasi (Dr)
Chief Executive