

Office of Hon Chris Hipkins

MP for Rimutaka

Minister of Education

Minister of State Services

Leader of the House

Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services



17 SEP 2018

Heather Baigent
President
Auckland U3A Network
interact-consult@xtra.co.nz

Dear Heather

Thank you for your letter of 26 August 2018 about the use of the term 'university' by U3A groups in New Zealand.

I appreciate the opportunities that U3A groups provide for older people to participate in education. The Government recognises the value of lifelong learning for all New Zealanders and the importance that sharing knowledge and skills can have for building resilient and sustainable communities.

I acknowledge your interest in U3A groups having the ability to use 'university' to refer to themselves, expressing connection with groups in other countries and their place in an international movement.

The previous advice from the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) remains accurate and section 292 of the Education Act 1989 does not allow an educational establishment or facility to use the term 'university' unless it is a university, Private Training Establishment or wānanga, with permission from the Minister of Education. The term 'educational establishments and facilities' is intended to cover a wide range of bodies that have an educational purpose.

The Act does not permit exemptions, and for this reason, I suggest U3A groups follow the original advice provided by NZQA to limit any written reference to U3A.

Thank you again for writing. I wish those involved with U3A all the very best with running your study and discussion groups across New Zealand.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'C. Hipkins'.

Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education