Kia Ora {PreferredName},

There is no doubt that this has been a challenging time for everyone as we adjust to our ‘new normal’ in this national lockdown period. It is also unsettling because right now we don’t know how long this situation will last. The University has been working very hard to ensure – as much as possible – that our students’ needs are met both academically and in the services we provide you.

At the same time we have had to review the financial impact of COVID-19 on the University. As an outcome of this we have developed an offering for our residents, which we hope comes as welcome news.

**Accommodation reduction offer**

Those of you who made the decision to move out temporarily during the lock down, but are still on an active contract in a fully-catered hall, will have your room account credited $130.00 per week. This will apply until you are able to move back in or Monday 6 of July (whichever comes first) and will be back-dated to Monday 30 March.

Those of you who have remained on-site in accommodation with us during this lockdown, your fees remain unchanged. However, we have established a new hardship fund of $1 million to aid those still on-site, who are experiencing financial difficulties in paying their university accommodation fees due to COVID-19.

For either group, if you decide to withdraw from accommodation during this period, and are able to fully vacate your room, we will allow you to do so with a reduced 4-week cancellation penalty (this is normally a penalty equating to 25% of the entire residential agreement period).

Please also note that following the Vice Chancellor’s announcement of the 2020 Semester date changes, we will be adjusting/extending the end dates for those contracts affected to accommodate this change.

**How did we reach this decision?**

Due to the size and operational structure of our organisation, the University is unable to access any government support. As an ancillary business unit within the University, our student accommodation is not subsidised from tuition fees or government tuition subsidies, so we are required to break-even financially, but do not make a profit. This is unlike other New Zealand for-profit accommodation providers, whether they are fully private or operate on behalf of tertiary providers on an outsourced model. These are able to access wage subsidies and other forms of government assistance.

While we are saving on food costs and on some utilities, we also have other costs that have become significantly larger, such as increased cleaning expenses. The University has contingency plans for unprecedented situations like this, and we are putting these in place. However, as for all other organisations across the country and the world, this has massive financial implications. Please be assured that we are doing our best to minimise costs and maintain services to you. The University is not making money off our residents during this difficult time.

*He waka eke noa, we’re all in this together.*

We hope these offerings will help alleviate some of the financial burden you may be experiencing.

Wherever you are during this lock down period, we hope you are staying safe and well, and we are looking forward to the time when our residential community can come back together again.

Nga mihi nui,

Micheal Rengers
Associate Director, Campus Life (Accommodation)
Accommodation | Nga Wharenohi
The University of Auckland | Te Whare Wananga o Tamaki-makaurau