

07/10/2020

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED],

Request for Information – Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987

We refer to your official information request dated 9 September 2020 for information regarding the email sent from campbell.barry@huttcity.govt.nz at or about 18:39 on Friday, 4 Sep 2020 with the subject “A long, but important message” (the email).

Information concerning email

The Mayor advises that he personally pays for the cost of NationBuilder.

Council can advise no official databases were used to source recipients for the Mayor’s email.

The Mayor advises NationBuilder was used to send the email. When sending a bulk email from within NationBuilder the sender can specify the email message to be sent from any name and any email. For example, it would be possible to specify an email to come from Jordan Williams at the Taxpayers Union, and appear to originate from an associated email account.

Council holds no information on the message sent by the Mayor, including any discussion about “the merits of the email” and any drafts.

Privacy breach

The Mayor advises 204 people who received the email signed up to attend a virtual public meeting with him on either the 2020/2021 Annual Plan, or changes to rubbish and recycling.

The Mayor advises an invite to attend these meetings was sent from NationBuilder, and accordingly, 100 people already on the Mayor’s personal database registered to attend.

The remaining 104 registered to attend as a result of advertising via other channels.

Registrants were imported into NationBuilder in order to send them further information about the virtual public meetings.

The Council form used to register people's attendance did not include a privacy statement or disclaimer. This was done in error, and had it been included would have asked people if they would like to receive further updates from the Mayor.

The Mayor has advised because of this, 104 people were sent his email in error.

No complaints were received from recipients, and your email on 9 September was the first time we were made aware of this issue.

Advice was sought from Council's Privacy Officer on 15 September and was provided on 16 September.

The Privacy Officer provided advice around the use of collection statements.

The Privacy Officer advised that it is unlikely that the recipients of the communication would feel their privacy had been negatively impacted.

As a result of this advice, the following actions have been taken:

- The affected people have been deleted from the Mayor's NationBuilder database; and
- No further information will be imported into NationBuilder, and separate systems will be used; and
- Privacy collection statements will be used when required.

The actions outlined above will ensure a similar situation does not reoccur in the future.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely,

Hutt City Council