

17 March 2023

Phil Pennington  
Radio New Zealand

s7(2)(a)

Tēnā koe Phil

**Request for Information pursuant to the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA)**

Thank you for your correspondence of 7 March 2023 in which you have requested the following official information:

*“With the opening of the Wgtn convention centre, RNZ seeks the latest information from HCC on its own convention centre and related ownership, operations and costs. Pls release the two latest most substantive reports on this.*

*Pls detail any major material changes subsequent to the revised 2021 agreement cited here <https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/AK2108/S00170/hutt-city-council-reaches-agreement-on-events-centre-and-sebel-hotel.htm>*

*Noting that this says, USAR is required to “complete the Sebel Hotel by 31 December 2021 at its own cost and operate it, in conjunction with the Events Centre through to at least 30 June 2027”, and that the hotel is not yet open 14 months later, pls detail what if anything HCC has done or may do about that.”*

Hutt City Council does not have any part in the Events Centre’s day by day operations. The operator of the Events Centre is USAR Commercial Assets Limited. The last report received about its operations was in August 2021.

Sebel Hotel in Lower Hutt is nearing completion and is due to be open during the month of May 2023. The Hotel Longstop Completion Date, which is currently 31 March 2023, has been extended until 31 May 2023. This extension is necessary to allow a water pipe in the vicinity of the hotel to be replaced. Landscaping of the Sebel Hotel is not able to be completed until the pipe has been replaced.

Under Clause 9.1 of the Agreement to Lease Events Centre and Develop Hotel dated 14 May 2015 (and subsequent variations), extensions can be made to the Hotel Longstop Completion Date if substantial progress is being made towards completion and that completion is likely on or before the extended date.

Contractually, the Hutt City Council can exercise remedies if targeted dates in the hotel's construction are not met. We have felt that imposing such remedies is unnecessary given that substantial progress is being made by Raman Sarin (USAR Commercial Assets Limited) towards completion of the hotel. We also recognise that COVID-19 created unforeseen commercial conditions, including impacting the availability of the construction workforce.

You may find the following links relating to information about the Sebel Hotel to be useful:

- Review of Agreement to Lease Events Centre and Develop a Hotel in the Audit and Risk Subcommittee report 16 June 2020 within:  
[http://infocouncil.huttcity.govt.nz/Open/2020/06/ARSC\\_16062020\\_AGN\\_2791\\_AT\\_WE\\_B.htm](http://infocouncil.huttcity.govt.nz/Open/2020/06/ARSC_16062020_AGN_2791_AT_WE_B.htm)
- Extract from Hutt City Council meeting 10 August 2021- linked from:  
[www.huttcity.govt.nz/people-and-communities/news/hutt-city-council-reaches-agreement-on-events-centre-and-sebel-hotel](http://www.huttcity.govt.nz/people-and-communities/news/hutt-city-council-reaches-agreement-on-events-centre-and-sebel-hotel)
- Stuff news article 17 March 2023  
<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/local-government/131507469/controversial-lower-hutt-hotel-set-to-open-at-last>

You have also asked the Council to “...release any advice HCC has related to the convention centre operations in light of the opening of the Wgtn convention centre; pls make clear if the business plan is being revised at all, or has been revised”.

Hutt City Council has not obtained any advice on the operation of the Lower Hutt Events Centre in light of the opening of the Wellington Convention Centre. Accordingly, your request for this information is refused under section 17(g) of the LGOIMA on the grounds that the information requested is not held by us and we have no reason to believe it is held by another local authority or government agency. Any decision to revise the Event Centre's business plan will be made by the operators of the Event Centre, not by the Hutt City Council.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this response. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this letter may be published on the Council's website.

Nāku noa, nā



Susan Sales  
**Senior Advisor, Official Information and Privacy**