

16 December 2022

Shaun McKenzie
[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe Shaun

Request for Information – Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act (LGOIMA) 1987

We refer to your official information request of 10 November 2022, further to your LGOIMA dated 13 October 2022 and our response to it dated 8 November 2022. You have requested the following:

1. *All emails related to my original request (13 October 2022) sent or received by Hutt City Council.*
2. *Council's plan to communicate the error to rate payers and how the refunds will be processed*

The emails relating to your original request are attached. Please note that some material has been withheld from these documents under section 7(2)(a) and 7(2)(b)(ii) of the Act, to protect the privacy of individuals and to protect material that is commercially sensitive.

With respect to your second question, we are currently working through a process with Westpac to enable refunds to be processed to rate payers and, in addition, a payment of the \$23,000 to be paid to a local charity. We expect this process to be in place by the end of December 2022.

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 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

Susan Sales

From: [REDACTED] s 7(2)(a)@westpac.co.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 8 November 2022 12:16 pm
To: Glenn Usoalii-Phillips; Darrin Newth
Cc: [REDACTED] s 7(2)(a)
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal
Attachments: Hutt City Council Pricing Schedule.pdf

Hello Glenn and Darrin,

Commercially sensitive and in-confidence

I trust your week is progressing well, please see below a further update for you.

Transactional banking fee audit

Please find attached the result of the transactional banking fee audit that we conducted. I am pleased to confirm that it is as expected and that no further error was identified.

Amending the website and the charge.

Have you been able to review the test site to check that it meets your expectations? Do let me know and I can arrange for it to be set live. Thank you.

Remediation

Would you like me to set up a time for us to get some feedback on our remediation options? If you could please let me know when suits, and I'll set up a teams meeting.

Ngā mihi

[REDACTED] s 7(2)(a)

[REDACTED] s 7(2)(a)
[REDACTED] s 7(2)(a)



[Westpac thought leadership](#) - specialist insights from industry and business leaders.

Classification: PROTECTED

From: [REDACTED] s 7(2)(a)
Sent: Friday, November 4, 2022 12:41 PM
To: Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>; Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>

Cc: [REDACTED] s 7(2)(a) @westpac.co.nz>

Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Kia ora Glenn and Darrin,

Commercially sensitive and in-confidence

Please note update below:

Amending the website and the charge.

Please see below a link to a test site that shows the updated website, We have:

- 1) Amended the charge to 1.9% from 2.1%
- 2) Removed the minimum charge.

Test link:

[REDACTED] s 7(2)(b)(ii)

Can you please test this and confirm that you are happy with these changes - once I hear from you I will direct the team to put the changes live, and this will be in place early next week

Transactional banking fee audit

I expect to get this to you early next week.

Remediation

As mentioned, Westpac is working through an remediation approach for the overcharge of the [REDACTED] s 7(2)(b)(ii) and would be grateful for feedback from Hutt City Council given how difficult it would be to refund the card payments.

We have established that since 2016, there were 19,000 transactions affected, totalling an amount of approximately \$23,000.

The largest amount overcharged in the last 12 months for a single transaction was \$1.36.

This is a hugely challenging scenario to try and address, given the following factors

- 1) Having a card number that was responsible for the transaction would not be enough to guarantee a refund. This is because the life of an average card is about 2-5 years at the most. There is a real likelihood that many of the cards will have expired and / or be closed, and therefore refunding all cards will not be possible.
- 2) Identification of the rate payers affected would need significant investigation and time.

Given the additional point that the overcharge amounts are very small, we are thinking about alternative ways to ensure we support the affected rate payers, and suggest exploration of the following ideas:

- 1) Westpac, with Hutt City Council's guidance, would donate the overcharged amount to a charity or a cause that would benefit Hutt City Rate Payers.
 - a) The Financial Markets Authority and the Commerce Commission have endorsed the payment of refunds to charity in situations where account details are not held for impacted customers. This has been applied to amounts under NZD \$20.

- 2) Westpac could refund the amount to Hutt City Council who could then apply the credit to the relevant ratepayer account

I am more than happy to discuss this with you once you have had a chance to get some feedback internally.

Let me know if you have any questions

Ngā mihi

§ 7(2)(a)

§ 7(2)(a)

§ 7(2)(a)



[Westpac thought leadership](#) - specialist insights from industry and business leaders.

Ngā mihi

§ 7(2)(a)

§ 7(2)(a)



[Westpac thought leadership](#) - specialist insights from industry and business leaders.

Classification: PROTECTED

From: Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>

Sent: Thursday, November 3, 2022 8:00 PM

To: § 7(2)(a) <§ 7(2)(a)@westpac.co.nz>; Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>

Cc: § 7(2)(a) <§ 7(2)(a)@westpac.co.nz>

Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Importance: High

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Westpac Group. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender.

Hi [REDACTED]

Can you please advise of any updates to your email below from 27 October 2022.

Thanks
Glenn

Ngā mihi | Regards
Glenn

Glenn Usoali'i-Phillips
Treasury Officer

Mobile: [REDACTED]
Email: glenn.usoalii-phillips@huttcity.govt.nz / treasury@huttcity.govt.nz

Hutt City Council, 30 Laings Road, Private Bag 31912, Lower Hutt 5040, New Zealand
T 04 570 6666, W www.huttcity.govt.nz F [huttcitycouncil](https://www.facebook.com/huttcitycouncil)



From: [REDACTED] [@westpac.co.nz](mailto:[REDACTED]@westpac.co.nz)
Sent: Friday, 28 October 2022 4:20 PM
To: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>; Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: [REDACTED] [@westpac.co.nz](mailto:[REDACTED]@westpac.co.nz)
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hi Darrin,

Please see my responses below..

Have a good weekend.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

Classification: PROTECTED

From: Darrin Newth
Sent: Friday, 28 October 2022 11:57 am
To: [REDACTED] [@westpac.co.nz](mailto:[REDACTED]@westpac.co.nz); Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: [REDACTED] [@westpac.co.nz](mailto:[REDACTED]@westpac.co.nz)
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal
Importance: High

Hi [REDACTED]

Our CFO has just asked a couple of questions on this:

- a) Does this convenience fee only relate to our online portal. Ie: do people using credit card at our cashiers get charged a convenience fee. Do people using other online services (building consents, traffic infringements etc) get charged this convenience fee

Yes, it only applies to the online portal

b) Per the website blurb below – while it states 2.1% fee – also states a \$3.50 minimum. Can we guarantee that \$3.50 is not being charged?

We have picked this up. The fee was set up to be charged but we can find no evidence of it ever being applied because of the large payment values. We will be removing this minimum fee when we make the correction to 1.9%.

s 7(2)(b)(ii)

Cheers D

From: [REDACTED] s 7(2)(a) <[REDACTED]@westpac.co.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 27 October 2022 4:17 pm
To: Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>; Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: [REDACTED] s 7(2)(a) <[REDACTED]@westpac.co.nz>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hi Glenn & Darrin,

Commercially sensitive & in-confidence

Thanks for your enquiry last week and Darrin for your time earlier today. We have conducted a rapid investigation and our findings are below.

Unfortunately, we have discovered an error in the Convenience Fee service:

- We are currently charging a fee of 2.1%, as displayed on the HCC payments page.
- We should be charging a fee of 1.9%, as per our contract.

Our preliminary investigation suggests this error has been in place since 2016, and we have estimated the total overcharging over this period to be approximately \$23,000 over 19,000 payments. The largest amount overcharged in the last 12 months for a single transaction has been \$1.36.

As a result, we have commenced work on fixing these errors, and expect the changes to be ready for HCC review in our test environment within the next week. Darrin, I note your request for a general fee audit and will also get this underway shortly.

Noting the very small amounts of money involved, the large number of payers, and the period of time over which this error occurred we are considering remediation options and I will provide an update soon.

We sincerely apologise for this error and the inconvenience it has caused HCC and its customers, and are fully committed to addressing this issue.

I note your LGOIMA request and have suggested answers below that I hope are helpful, although of course I fully respect HCC's right to respond as it sees fit.

Please note that we consider the information in this correspondence to be commercially sensitive and accordingly we request that if any party makes an application under the LGOIMA to obtain this correspondence or any information in it that we are advised in advance so we can make submissions on the appropriateness of any release prior to that occurring.

Regards,

§ 7(2)(a)

1. Why are Hutt City rate payers paying a higher fee than Porirua rate payers?

Westpac has identified this is a billing error and has established a team to investigate and fix the issue.

2. Has the council attempted to negotiate a lower fee with Westpac? If yes, I would like to request a copy of communication between the council and Westpac about this. If no, then why not?

As above, this is due to a billing error. HCC is a signatory to the All-of-Government banking services agreement for which MBIE negotiates on behalf of the State Service.

3. Has anyone raised the Westpac fee as a complaint with the council before? If yes, how many complaints and what dates were they raised.

[We cannot comment on this, other than note we do not believe it has been raised with us in the past]

§ 7(2)(a)

§ 7(2)(a)



Westpac NZ Government
**INNOVATION
FUND**

Classification: PROTECTED

From: § 7(2)(a) <§ 7(2)(a)>@westpac.co.nz

Sent: Thursday, October 20, 2022 5:15 PM

To: Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>

Cc: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>; § 7(2)(a) <§ 7(2)(a)>@westpac.co.nz

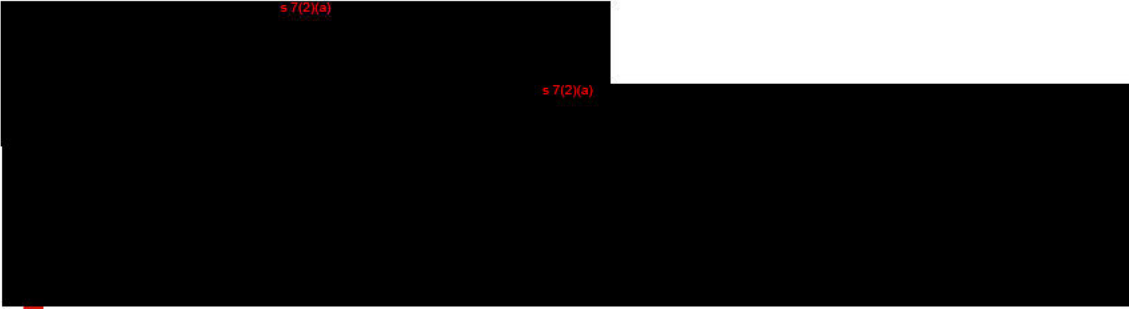
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hello Glenn,

Just a quick note to say that we are investigating this with priority and will be back in touch early to mid-next week with an update.

I have [redacted] in cc as he will take this forward next week as I am on annual leave.

Ngā mihi



[Westpac thought leadership](#) - specialist insights from industry and business leaders.

Classification: PROTECTED

From: Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, October 19, 2022 11:03 AM
To: [redacted] <[\[redacted\]@westpac.co.nz](mailto:[redacted]@westpac.co.nz)>
Cc: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal
Importance: High

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Westpac Group. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender.

Hi [redacted]

Please refer below.

We have received the LOGIMA query as outlined below, which we are obligated to respond to in a timely manner.

Your comments as to our fee's when compared to Porirua would be appreciated.

Thank you in anticipation.

Glenn

From: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 19 October 2022 10:12 AM
To: Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hi Glenn

Are you able to contact our relationship manager and see what they say in relation to the following

Thanks
Cheers D

Darrin Newth
Financial Accounting Manager

Hutt City Council, 30 Laings Road, Lower Hutt 5040
P: 04 570 6989 M: [REDACTED] W: www.huttcity.govt.nz



From: Jenny Livschitz <Jenny.Livschitz@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, 17 October 2022 12:39 pm
To: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>; Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: Alicia Andrews <Alicia.Andrews@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hi Darrin

Please see the LGOIMA request that has been raised below and requires a response. Can you please draft up a response please for my review.

If this is part of our Westpac contractual arrangements, then it would be helpful to our Westpac relationship manager to provide an answer here...ideally that they will reduce it immediately.

Thanks
Jenny

From: Jenny Livschitz
Sent: Monday, 17 October 2022 12:35 pm
To: Information Management Team <informationmanagementteam@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Thanks Susan, yes we can.

I will make contact with the relevant staff member and get back to you on this.

From: Information Management Team <informationmanagementteam@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, 17 October 2022 12:18 pm
To: Jenny Livschitz <Jenny.Livschitz@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Morena Jenny

We have received this LGOIMA below re surcharge for receiving online payments.

Is your team able to help with compiling a few words to answer this query?

Ngā mihi

Susan Sales

Ringa Āwhina Tāhūhū ki Te Koromatua | Senior Advisor

Te Kaunihera o Te Awa Kairangi | Hutt City Council, [30 Laings Road](#), Private Bag 31912, Lower Hutt 5040, New Zealand
Paetukutuku: www.huttcity.govt.nz

From: ContactHCC <contact@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Friday, 14 October 2022 4:44 pm
To: Information Management Team <informationmanagementteam@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

From: Shaun McKenzie [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 13 Oct [REDACTED]
To: ContactHCC <contact@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hi

I've noticed that both Hutt City Council and Porirua City Council both use the payments online portal for handling online payments. Both Councils also include a Westpac fee when using the online portal. Porirua City Council have an additional charge of 1.9%, while Hutt City Council is 2.1% (attached below are images from each councils payment page).

My questions are:

1. Why are Hutt City rate payers paying a higher fee than Porirua rate payers?
2. Has the council attempted to negotiate a lower fee with Westpac? If yes, I would like to request a copy of communication between the council and Westpac about this. If no, then why not?
3. Has anyone raised the Westpac fee as a complaint with the council before? If yes, how many complaints and what dates were they raised.

Regards
Shaun



Credit card payment

This service is provided by our bank, Westpac New Zealand Limited, in agreement with Porirua City Council. You do not have to be a Westpac customer to use this service.

Payment can be made with Visa or MasterCard credit cards.



Important

A **convenience fee** of 1.90% per transaction is applied by Westpac New Zealand Limited to transactions processed through this site. This fee appears as a separate transaction on your credit card statement and is referred to as "Westpac Convenience Fee". You should check with your card issuer for details about other fees or charges that may also apply, as this credit card transaction is carried out in terms of the arrangement between you and your card issuer.

If payment is made using a credit card issued outside New Zealand, any currency conversion will be done according to the terms and conditions of the card - there may be currency conversion fees charged by your card issuer.

Transactions made after 10:30PM New Zealand time will be processed by Porirua City Council on the following business day.

[Return to Porirua City Home Page](#)

Continue



Credit card payment

This service is provided by our bank, Westpac New Zealand Limited, in agreement with Hutt City Council. You do not have to be a Westpac customer to use this service.

Payment can be made with Visa or MasterCard credit cards.



Important

A **convenience fee** of 2.1% per transaction is applied by Westpac New Zealand Limited to transactions processed through this site. A minimum convenience fee of \$3.50 applies to transactions that fall below this threshold. Hutt City Council does not receive any part of this fee. This fee appears as a separate transaction on your credit card statement and is referred to as "Westpac Convenience Fee". You should check with your card issuer for details about other fees or charges that may also apply, as this credit card transaction is carried out in terms of the arrangement between you and your card issuer.

If payment is made using a credit card issued outside New Zealand, any currency conversion will be done according to the terms and conditions of the card - there may be currency conversion fees charged by your card issuer.

Transactions made after 10:30PM New Zealand time will be processed by Hutt City Council on the following business day.

[Return to Hutt City Home Page](#)

Continue

The contents of this email and any attachments are confidential and may be legally privileged. If you are not the intended recipient please advise the sender immediately and delete the email and attachments. Any use, dissemination, reproduction or distribution of this email and any attachments by anyone other than the intended recipient is prohibited.

Susan Sales

From: Alicia Andrews
Sent: Friday, 4 November 2022 4:03 pm
To: Darrin Newth
Cc: Bina Govind
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hi Darrin

Thanks for sending on.

I'm not really happy about it. It's not a great outcome for our ratepayers or our team.

I think it would be good to talk it through with Westpac. I wonder if they can look at refunding transactions for the last 2 years (maybe) as they have indicated that cards are usually used for 2-5 years.

I'm not comfortable with the second option because the houses may have sold or the person paying the rates may not have been the ratepayer etc etc . I think we would be getting in to messy territory and this isn't our error to fix.

Ideally – the overcharge would be returned to the cardholder.

I'm including Bina but I haven't had a chance to talk to her. She may feel different 😊

Just my early thoughts and happy to take direction and/or input from a wider group.

Cheers, Alicia

Alicia Andrews
Finance Transaction Services Manager

Hutt City Council, 30 Laings Road, Lower Hutt 5040
P: 04 570 6666 **M:** [REDACTED] **W:** www.huttcity.govt.nz



From: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Friday, 4 November 2022 1:12 pm
To: Alicia Andrews <Alicia.Andrews@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hi
Given that this relates to rates – are you able to check this please and make sure you are happy with it

Cheers D

Darrin Newth
Financial Accounting Manager

Hutt City Council, 30 Laings Road, Lower Hutt 5040
P: 04 570 6989 M: [REDACTED] W: www.huttcity.govt.nz



From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@westpac.co.nz>
Sent: Friday, 4 November 2022 12:41 pm
To: Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>; Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@westpac.co.nz>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Kia ora Glenn and Darrin,

Commercially sensitive and in-confidence

Please note update below:

Amending the website and the charge.

Please see below a link to a test site that shows the updated website, We have:

- 1) Amended the charge to 1.9% from 2.1%
- 2) Removed the minimum charge.

[REDACTED]

Can you please test this and confirm that you are happy with these changes - once I hear from you I will direct the team to put the changes live, and this will be in place early next week.

Transactional banking fee audit

I expect to get this to you early next week.

Remediation

As mentioned, Westpac is working through an remediation approach for the overcharge of the Convenience fee and would be grateful for feedback from Hutt City Council given how difficult it would be to refund the card payments.

We have established that since 2016, there were 19,000 transactions affected, totalling an amount of approximately \$23,000.

The largest amount overcharged in the last 12 months for a single transaction was \$1.36.

This is a hugely challenging scenario to try and address, given the following factors

- 1) Having a card number that was responsible for the transaction would not be enough to guarantee a refund. This is because the life of an average card is about 2-5 years at the most. There is a real likelihood that many of the cards will have expired and / or be closed, and therefore refunding all cards will not be possible.
- 2) Identification of the rate payers affected would need significant investigation and time.

Given the additional point that the overcharge amounts are very small, we are thinking about alternative ways to ensure we support the affected rate payers, and suggest exploration of the following ideas:

- 1) Westpac, with Hutt City Council's guidance, would donate the overcharged amount to a charity or a cause that would benefit Hutt City Rate Payers.
 - a) The Financial Markets Authority and the Commerce Commission have endorsed the payment of refunds to charity in situations where account details are not held for impacted customers. This has been applied to amounts under NZD \$20.
- 2) Westpac could refund the amount to Hutt City Council who could then apply the credit to the relevant ratepayer account

I am more than happy to discuss this with you once you have had a chance to get some feedback internally.

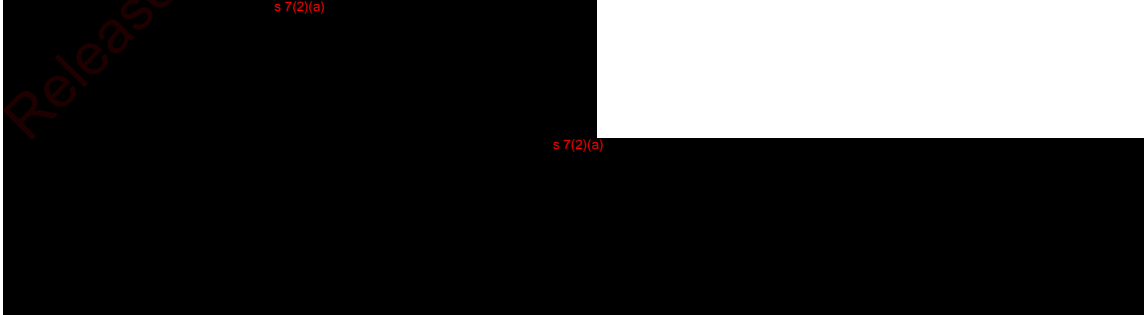
Let me know if you have any questions

Ngā mihi



[Westpac thought leadership](#) - specialist insights from industry and business leaders.

Ngā mihi



[Westpac thought leadership](#) - specialist insights from industry and business leaders.

Classification: PROTECTED

From: Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Thursday, November 3, 2022 8:00 PM
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@westpac.co.nz>; Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@westpac.co.nz>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal
Importance: High

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Westpac Group. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender.

Hi [REDACTED]

Can you please advise of any updates to your email below from 27 October 2022.

Thanks
Glenn

Ngā mihi | Regards
Glenn

Glenn Usoalii-Phillips
Treasury Officer

Mobile: [REDACTED]
Email: glenn.usoalii-phillips@huttcity.govt.nz / treasury@huttcity.govt.nz

Hutt City Council, 30 Laings Road, Private Bag 31912, Lower Hutt 5040, New Zealand
T 04 570 6666, W www.huttcity.govt.nz F huttcitycouncil



From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@westpac.co.nz>
Sent: Friday, 28 October 2022 4:20 PM
To: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>; Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@westpac.co.nz>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hi Darrin,

Please see my responses below..

Have a good weekend.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

From: Darrin Newth
Sent: Friday, 28 October 2022 11:57 am
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@westpac.co.nz>; Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@westpac.co.nz>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal
Importance: High

Hi [REDACTED]

Our CFO has just asked a couple of questions on this:

- a) Does this convenience fee only relate to our online portal. I.e: do people using credit card at our cashiers get charged a convenience fee. Do people using other online services (building consents, traffic infringements etc) get charged this convenience fee

Yes, it only applies to the online portal

- b) Per the website blurb below – while it states 2.1% fee – also states a \$3.50 minimum. Can we guarantee that \$3.50 is not being charged?

We have picked this up. The fee was set up to be charged but we can find no evidence of it ever being applied because of the large payment values. We will be removing this minimum fee when we make the correction to 1.9%.

[REDACTED]

Cheers D

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@westpac.co.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 27 October 2022 4:17 pm
To: Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>; Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@westpac.co.nz>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hi Glenn & Darrin,

Commercially sensitive & in-confidence

Thanks for your enquiry last week and Darrin for your time earlier today. We have conducted a rapid investigation and our findings are below.

Unfortunately, we have discovered an error in the Convenience Fee service:

- We are currently charging a fee of 2.1%, as displayed on the HCC payments page.
- We should be charging a fee of 1.9%, as per our contract.

Our preliminary investigation suggests this error has been in place since 2016, and we have estimated the total overcharging over this period to be approximately \$23,000 over 19,000 payments. The largest amount overcharged in the last 12 months for a single transaction has been \$1.36.

As a result, we have commenced work on fixing these errors, and expect the changes to be ready for HCC review in our test environment within the next week. Darrin, I note your request for a general fee audit and will also get this underway shortly.

Noting the very small amounts of money involved, the large number of payers, and the period of time over which this error occurred we are considering remediation options and I will provide an update soon.

We sincerely apologise for this error and the inconvenience it has caused HCC and its customers, and are fully committed to addressing this issue.

I note your LGOIMA request and have suggested answers below that I hope are helpful, although of course I fully respect HCC's right to respond as it sees fit.

Please note that we consider the information in this correspondence to be commercially sensitive and accordingly we request that if any party makes an application under the LGOIMA to obtain this correspondence or any information in it that we are advised in advance so we can make submissions on the appropriateness of any release prior to that occurring.

Regards,

§ 7(2)(a)

1. Why are Hutt City rate payers paying a higher fee than Porirua rate payers?

Westpac has identified this is a billing error and has established a team to investigate and fix the issue.

2. Has the council attempted to negotiate a lower fee with Westpac? If yes, I would like to request a copy of communication between the council and Westpac about this. If no, then why not?

As above, this is due to a billing error. HCC is a signatory to the All-of-Government banking services agreement for which MBIE negotiates on behalf of the State Service.

3. Has anyone raised the Westpac fee as a complaint with the council before? If yes, how many complaints and what dates were they raised.

[We cannot comment on this, other than note we do not believe it has been raised with us in the past]

§ 7(2)(a)

§ 7(2)(a)



Westpac NZ Government
**INNOVATION
FUND**

Classification: PROTECTED

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@westpac.co.nz>
Sent: Thursday, October 20, 2022 5:15 PM
To: Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@westpac.co.nz>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hello Glenn,

Just a quick note to say that we are investigating this with priority and will be back in touch early to mid-next week with an update.

I have [REDACTED] in cc as he will take this forward next week as I am on annual leave.

Ngā mihi

[REDACTED]



[Westpac thought leadership](#) - specialist insights from industry and business leaders.

Classification: PROTECTED

From: Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, October 19, 2022 11:03 AM
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@westpac.co.nz>
Cc: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal
Importance: High

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Westpac Group. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender.

Hi [REDACTED]

Please refer below.

We have received the LOGIMA query as outlined below, which we are obligated to respond to in a timely manner.

Your comments as to our fee's when compared to Porirua would be appreciated.

Thank you in anticipation.

Glenn

From: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 19 October 2022 10:12 AM
To: Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hi Glenn

Are you able to contact our relationship manager and see what they say in relation to the following

Thanks
Cheers D

Darrin Newth
Financial Accounting Manager

Hutt City Council, 30 Laings Road, Lower Hutt 5040
P: 04 570 6989 **M:** [REDACTED] **W:** www.huttcity.govt.nz



From: Jenny Livschitz <Jenny.Livschitz@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, 17 October 2022 12:39 pm
To: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>; Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: Alicia Andrews <Alicia.Andrews@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hi Darrin

Please see the LGOIMA request that has been raised below and requires a response. Can you please draft up a response please for my review.

If this is part of our Westpac contractual arrangements, then it would be helpful to our Westpac relationship manager to provide an answer here...ideally that they will reduce it immediately.

Thanks
Jenny

From: Jenny Livschitz
Sent: Monday, 17 October 2022 12:35 pm
To: Information Management Team <informationmanagementteam@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Thanks Susan, yes we can.

I will make contact with the relevant staff member and get back to you on this.

From: Information Management Team <informationmanagementteam@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, 17 October 2022 12:18 pm
To: Jenny Livschitz <Jenny.Livschitz@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Morena Jenny

We have received this LGOIMA below re surcharge for receiving online payments.

Is your team able to help with compiling a few words to answer this query?

Ngā mihi

Susan Sales

Ringa Āwhina Tāhūhū ki Te Koromatua | Senior Advisor

Te Kaunihera o Te Awa Kairangi | Hutt City Council, [30 Laings Road](#), Private Bag 31912, Lower Hutt 5040, New Zealand
Paetukutuku: www.huttcity.govt.nz

From: ContactHCC <contact@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Friday, 14 October 2022 4:44 pm
To: Information Management Team <informationmanagementteam@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

From: Shaun McKenzie [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 13 October 2022 4:29 PM
To: ContactHCC <contact@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hi

I've noticed that both Hutt City Council and Porirua City Council both use the payments online portal for handling online payments. Both Councils also include a Westpac fee when using the online portal. Porirua City Council have an additional charge of 1.9%, while Hutt City Council is 2.1% (attached below are images from each councils payment page).

My questions are:

1. Why are Hutt City rate payers paying a higher fee than Porirua rate payers?
2. Has the council attempted to negotiate a lower fee with Westpac? If yes, I would like to request a copy of communication between the council and Westpac about this. If no, then why not?

3. Has anyone raised the Westpac fee as a complaint with the council before? If yes, how many complaints and what dates were they raised.

Regards
Shaun



Credit card payment

This service is provided by our bank, Westpac New Zealand Limited, in agreement with Porirua City Council. You do not have to be a Westpac customer to use this service.

Payment can be made with Visa or MasterCard credit cards.



Important

A **convenience fee** of 1.90% per transaction is applied by Westpac New Zealand Limited to transactions processed through this site. This fee appears as a separate transaction on your credit card statement and is referred to as "Westpac Convenience Fee". You should check with your card issuer for details about other fees or charges that may also apply, as this credit card transaction is carried out in terms of the arrangement between you and your card issuer.

If payment is made using a credit card issued outside New Zealand, any currency conversion will be done according to the terms and conditions of the card - there may be currency conversion fees charged by your card issuer.

Transactions made after 10:30PM New Zealand time will be processed by Porirua City Council on the following business day.

[Return to Porirua City Home Page](#)

Continue



Credit card payment

This service is provided by our bank, Westpac New Zealand Limited, in agreement with Hutt City Council. You do not have to be a Westpac customer to use this service.

Payment can be made with Visa or MasterCard credit cards.



Important

A **convenience fee** of 2.1% per transaction is applied by Westpac New Zealand Limited to transactions processed through this site. A minimum convenience fee of \$3.50 applies to transactions that fall below this threshold. Hutt City Council does not receive any part of this fee. This fee appears as a separate transaction on your credit card statement and is referred to as "Westpac Convenience Fee". You should check with your card issuer for details about other fees or charges that may also apply, as this credit card transaction is carried out in terms of the arrangement between you and your card issuer.

If payment is made using a credit card issued outside New Zealand, any currency conversion will be done according to the terms and conditions of the card - there may be currency conversion fees charged by your card issuer.

Transactions made after 10:30PM New Zealand time will be processed by Hutt City Council on the following business day.

[Return to Hutt City Home Page](#)

Continue

Susan Sales

From: [REDACTED] s 7(2)(a)@westpac.co.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 1 November 2022 5:51 pm
To: Alicia Andrews; Darrin Newth
Cc: [REDACTED] s 7(2)(a)
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] RE: Westpac fee when using online rates payment portal

Kia ora Alicia,

Noted, thank you.

Given your comments it is probably worth noting that we are considering (and would like to discuss with HCC and get feedback) the potential for an alternative remediation process rather than direct refunds to cardholders. As alluded to in our note below there are fairly significant complications given the length of time involved, and given the amount per transaction is very low we feel there is merit in looking at alternatives.

In the meantime, if you're unable to wait, my suggestion is to use language along the lines of "HCC is working with Westpac on a remediation process" (versus refund process) to allow for some flexibility of approach.

@Darrin Newth – as discussed [REDACTED] s 7(2)(a) will give you a call on the above + fix progress.

Ngā manaakitanga,

[REDACTED] s 7(2)(a)

Classification: PROTECTED

From: Alicia Andrews <Alicia.Andrews@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, November 1, 2022 4:01 PM
To: [REDACTED] s 7(2)(a)@westpac.co.nz>; Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: [REDACTED] s 7(2)(a)@westpac.co.nz>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] RE: Westpac fee when using online rates payment portal

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Westpac Group. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender.

Kia ora [REDACTED] s 7(2)(a)

I'm arranging for our website to be updated with our response to the request for information and preparing for our customer facing teams to receive some questions from members of the public.

I think the main question we will receive will be about wanting a refund and I'm keen to be able to support our teams with information they can share.

Can you please bear this in mind in your internal conversations and include something back when you update tomorrow?

Ngā mihi, Alicia

Alicia Andrews

Finance Transaction Services Manager

Hutt City Council, 30 Laings Road, Lower Hutt 5040

P: 04 570 6666 M: [REDACTED] W: www.huttcity.govt.nz



IMPORTANT: The information contained in this e-mail message may be legally privileged or confidential. The information is intended only for the recipient named in the e-mail message. If the reader of this e-mail message is not the intended recipient, you are notified that any use, copying or distribution of this e-mail message is prohibited. If you have received this e-mail message in error, please notify the sender immediately. Thank you

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@westpac.co.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 1 November 2022 3:49 pm
To: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>; Alicia Andrews <Alicia.Andrews@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@westpac.co.nz>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Westpac fee when using online rates payment portal

Hi Darrin,

We should have some updates tomorrow for you. Happily [REDACTED] is back on deck and will give you call following our incident team meeting tomorrow afternoon.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

Classification: PROTECTED

From: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, November 1, 2022 3:13 PM
To: Alicia Andrews <Alicia.Andrews@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@westpac.co.nz>
Subject: FW: Westpac fee when using online rates payment portal

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Westpac Group. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender.

Hi Alicia

We have approved the release of the LGOIMA request – so should be out shortly.

Therefore as per your earlier email – in terms of briefing the team and putting something on the website – should be OK to go ahead

s 7(2)(a) – any further updates on this. Assume the main thing of interest will be

- a) When the fix has been done
- b) Around any potential refunds to clients

Cheers D

Darrin Newth

Financial Accounting Manager

Hutt City Council, 30 Laings Road, Lower Hutt 5040

P: 04 570 6989 M: s 7(2)(a) W: www.huttcity.govt.nz



IMPORTANT: The information contained in this e-mail message may be legally privileged or confidential. The information is intended only for the recipient named in the e-mail message. If the reader of this e-mail message is not the intended recipient, you are notified that any use, copying or distribution of this e-mail message is prohibited. If you have received this e-mail message in error, please notify the sender immediately. Thank you

From: Jo Miller <Jo.Miller@huttcity.govt.nz>

Sent: Tuesday 1 November 2022 2:42 pm

To: Jenny Livschitz <Jenny.Livschitz@huttcity.govt.nz>

Cc: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>; Alicia Andrews <Alicia.Andrews@huttcity.govt.nz>; Caryn Ellis <Caryn.Ellis@huttcity.govt.nz>

Subject: Re: Westpac fee when using online rates payment portal

Thanks for the detailed information on this, much appreciated . Jo

Ngā mihi nui

Jo Miller



On 31/10/2022, at 4:51 PM, Jenny Livschitz <Jenny.Livschitz@huttcity.govt.nz> wrote:

Hi Jo

We have recently received an information request from Shaun McKenzie relating to the fee our bankers are charging on credit card transactions (2.1%) in comparison to that charged for Porirua City Council (1.9%). After contacting our bankers, we have discovered that there is in fact an error in the pricing structure being applied. As signatories to the All of Government banking services contract the rate should be 1.9%.

Westpac preliminary investigation suggests this error has been in place since 2016, and have estimated the total overcharging over this period to be approximately \$23,000 over 19,000 payments. The largest amount overcharged in the last 12 months for a single transaction has been \$1.36. [This would equate to a person paying \$680 rates on their credit card and being overcharged 0.2%]

Steps are in place to correct this error going forward and Westpac have apologised for this error.

Noting the very small amounts of money involved, the large number of payers, and the period of time over which this error occurred Westpac are considering remediation options and will provide us with an update soon.

We are proposing to respond to the LGOIMA request as follows:

1. Why are Hutt City rate payers paying a higher fee than Porirua rate payers?
Westpac has identified this is a billing error and has established a team to investigate and fix the issue. We expect the fee will be reduced to 1.9% in the coming weeks to align with that of Porirua City Council and other members of the "All-Of Government banking services agreements".
2. Has the council attempted to negotiate a lower fee with Westpac? If yes, I would like to request a copy of communication between the council and Westpac about this. If no, then why not?

HCC is a signatory to the All-of-Government banking services agreement for which MBIE negotiates on our behalf. As such, all fees should be consistent for all parties under that agreement.

3. Has anyone raised the Westpac fee as a complaint with the council before? If yes, how many complaints and what dates were they raised.

To our knowledge, we have had no complaints in relation to the fees being charged by Westpac for Hutt City Council transactions compared to other Council charges. Westpac have advised, the largest amount overcharged in the last 12 months for a single transaction has been approximately \$1.36.

Ngā mihi

Jenny Livschitz

Kaihautū Ahumoni | Group Chief Financial Officer

Te Kaunihera o Te Awa Kairangi | Hutt City Council, 30 Laings Road, Private Bag 31912, Lower Hutt 5040, New Zealand

Kawereore s 7(2)(a), Paetukutuku www.huttcity.govt.nz

The contents of this email and any attachments are confidential and may be legally privileged. If you are not the intended recipient please advise the sender immediately and delete the email and attachments. Any use, dissemination, reproduction or distribution of this email and any attachments by anyone other than the intended recipient is prohibited.

The contents of this email and any attachments are confidential and may be legally privileged. If you are not the intended recipient please advise the sender immediately and delete the email and attachments. Any use, dissemination, reproduction or distribution of this email and any attachments by anyone other than the intended recipient is prohibited.

Susan Sales

From: Alicia Andrews
Sent: Tuesday, 1 November 2022 3:37 pm
To: Bina Govind; Susan Sales
Cc: Darrin Newth
Subject: FW: Westpac fee when using online rates payment portal
Attachments: ATT00001.png

Hi Bina, Susan

We are releasing this LGOIMA response that will be potentially be contentious and I'm keen that we are proactive about releasing the information. @Susan Sales – do we have somewhere on the website where we can publish LGOIMA responses? And what are your thoughts on this?

Thanks, Alicia

Alicia Andrews

Finance Transaction Services Manager

Hutt City Council, 30 Laings Road, Lower Hutt 5040

P: 04 570 6666 M: [REDACTED] W: www.huttcity.govt.nz



From: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 1 November 2022 3:13 pm
To: Alicia Andrews <Alicia.Andrews@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: [REDACTED]@westpac.co.nz
Subject: FW: Westpac fee when using online rates payment portal

Hi Alicia

We have approved the release of the LGOIMA request – so should be out shortly.

Therefore as per your earlier email – in terms of briefing the team and putting something on the website – should be OK to go ahead

[REDACTED] – any further updates on this. Assume the main thing of interest will be

- a) When the fix has been done
- b) Around any potential refunds to clients

Cheers D

Darrin Newth
Financial Accounting Manager

Hutt City Council, 30 Laings Road, Lower Hutt 5040
P: 04 570 6989 M: [REDACTED] W: www.huttcity.govt.nz



IMPORTANT: The information contained in this e-mail message may be legally privileged or confidential. The information is intended only for the recipient named in the e-mail message. If the reader of this e-mail message is not the intended recipient, you are notified that any use, copying or distribution of this e-mail message is prohibited. If you have received this e-mail message in error, please notify the sender immediately. Thank you

From: Jo Miller <Jo.Miller@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 1 November 2022 2:42 pm
To: Jenny Livschitz <Jenny.Livschitz@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>; Alicia Andrews <Alicia.Andrews@huttcity.govt.nz>; Caryn Ellis <Caryn.Ellis@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: Re: Westpac fee when using online rates payment portal

Thanks for the detailed information on this, much appreciated . Jo

Ngā mihi nui

Jo Miller
Tumu Whakarae
Chief Executive Officer

Hutt City Council, 30 Laings Road, Lower Hutt 5010, New Zealand

T: 04 570 6773 | M: [REDACTED]
W: www.huttcity.govt.nz

Follow me on Twitter [@jomillernz](https://twitter.com/jomillernz)



On 31/10/2022, at 4:51 PM, Jenny Livschitz <Jenny.Livschitz@huttcity.govt.nz> wrote:

Hi Jo

We have recently received an information request from Shaun McKenzie relating to the fee our bankers are charging on credit card transactions (2.1%) in comparison to that charged for Porirua City Council (1.9%). After contacting our bankers, we have discovered that there is in fact an error in the pricing structure being applied. As signatories to the All of Government banking services contract the rate should be 1.9%.

Westpac preliminary investigation suggests this error has been in place since 2016, and have estimated the total overcharging over this period to be approximately \$23,000 over 19,000 payments. The largest amount overcharged in the last 12 months for a single transaction has been \$1.36. [This would equate to a person paying \$680 rates on their credit card and being overcharged 0.2%]

Steps are in place to correct this error going forward and Westpac have apologised for this error.

Noting the very small amounts of money involved, the large number of payers, and the period of time over which this error occurred Westpac are considering remediation options and will provide us with an update soon.

We are proposing to respond to the LGOIMA request as follows:

1. Why are Hutt City rate payers paying a higher fee than Porirua rate payers?
Westpac has identified this is a billing error and has established a team to investigate and fix the issue. We expect the fee will be reduced to 1.9% in the coming weeks to align with that of Porirua City Council and other members of the "All-Of Government banking services agreements".
2. Has the council attempted to negotiate a lower fee with Westpac? If yes, I would like to request a copy of communication between the council and Westpac about this. If no, then why not?
HCC is a signatory to the All-of-Government banking services agreement for which MBIE negotiates on our behalf. As such, all fees should be consistence for all parties under that agreement.
3. Has anyone raised the Westpac fee as a complaint with the council before? If yes, how many complaints and what dates were they raised.

To our knowledge, we have had no complaints in relation to the fees being charged by Westpac for Hutt City Council transactions compared to other Council charges. Westpac have advised, the largest amount overcharged in the last 12 months for a single transaction has been approximately \$1.36.

Ngā mihi

Jenny Livschitz

Kaihautū Ahumoni | Group Chief Financial Officer

Te Kaunihera o Te Awa Kairangi | Hutt City Council, 30 Laings Road, Private Bag 31912, Lower Hutt 5040, New Zealand

Kawereo s 7(2)(a), Paetukutuku www.huttcity.govt.nz

Released under Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act

Susan Sales

From: Information Management Team
Sent: Monday, 17 October 2022 1:19 pm
To: Jenny Livschitz
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Thank you 😊

Ngā mihi

Susan Sales

Ringa Āwhina Tāhūhū ki Te Koromatua | Senior Advisor

Te Kaunihera o Te Awa Kairangi | Hutt City Council, [30 Laings Road](#), Private Bag 31912, Lower Hutt 5040, New Zealand
Paetukutuku: www.huttcity.govt.nz

From: Jenny Livschitz <Jenny.Livschitz@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, 17 October 2022 12:35 pm
To: Information Management Team <informationmanagementteam@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Thanks Susan, yes we can.

I will make contact with the relevant staff member and get back to you on this.

From: Information Management Team <informationmanagementteam@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, 17 October 2022 12:18 pm
To: Jenny Livschitz <Jenny.Livschitz@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Morena Jenny

We have received this LGOIMA below re surcharge for receiving online payments.

Is your team able to help with compiling a few words to answer this query?

Ngā mihi

Susan Sales

Te Kaunihera o Te Awa Kairangi | Hutt City Council, [30 Laings Road](#), Private Bag 31912, Lower Hutt 5040, New Zealand
Paetukutuku: www.huttcity.govt.nz

From: ContactHCC <contact@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Friday, 14 October 2022 4:44 pm
To: Information Management Team <informationmanagementteam@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

From: Shaun McKenzie [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 13 October 2022 4:29 PM
To: ContactHCC <contact@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hi

I've noticed that both Hutt City Council and Porirua City Council both use the payments online portal for handling online payments. Both Councils also include a Westpac fee when using the online portal. Porirua City Council have an additional charge of 1.9%, while Hutt City Council is 2.1% (attached below are images from each councils payment page).

My questions are:

1. Why are Hutt City rate payers paying a higher fee than Porirua rate payers?
2. Has the council attempted to negotiate a lower fee with Westpac? If yes, I would like to request a copy of communication between the council and Westpac about this. If no, then why not?
3. Has anyone raised the Westpac fee as a complaint with the council before? If yes, how many complaints and what dates were they raised.

Regards
Shaun



Credit card payment

This service is provided by our bank, Westpac New Zealand Limited, in agreement with Porirua City Council. You do not have to be a Westpac customer to use this service.

Payment can be made with Visa or MasterCard credit cards.



Important

A **convenience fee** of 1.90% per transaction is applied by Westpac New Zealand Limited to transactions processed through this site. This fee appears as a separate transaction on your credit card statement and is referred to as "Westpac Convenience Fee". You should check with your card issuer for details about other fees or charges that may also apply, as this credit card transaction is carried out in terms of the arrangement between you and your card issuer.

If payment is made using a credit card issued outside New Zealand, any currency conversion will be done according to terms and conditions of the card - there may be currency conversion fees charged by your card issuer.

Transactions made after 10:30PM New Zealand time will be processed by Porirua City Council on the following business day.

[Return to Porirua City Home Page](#)

Continue



Credit card payment

This service is provided by our bank, Westpac New Zealand Limited, in agreement with Hutt City Council. You do not have to be a Westpac customer to use this service.

Payment can be made with Visa or MasterCard credit cards.



Important

A **convenience fee** of 2.1% per transaction is applied by Westpac New Zealand Limited to transactions processed through this site. A minimum convenience fee of \$3.50 applies to transactions that fall below this threshold. Hutt City Council does not receive any part of this fee. This fee appears as a separate transaction on your credit card statement and is referred to as "Westpac Convenience Fee". You should check with your card issuer for details about other fees or charges that may also apply, as this credit card transaction is carried out in terms of the arrangement between you and your card issuer.

If payment is made using a credit card issued outside New Zealand, any currency conversion will be done according to the terms and conditions of the card - there may be currency conversion fees charged by your card issuer.

Transactions made after 10:30PM New Zealand time will be processed by Hutt City Council on the following business day.

[Return to Hutt City Home Page](#)

Continue

Susan Sales

From: [REDACTED] s 7(2)(a)@westpac.co.nz>
Sent: Friday, 28 October 2022 4:20 pm
To: Darrin Newth; Glenn Usoalii-Phillips
Cc: [REDACTED] s 7(2)(a)
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hi Darrin,

Please see my responses below..

Have a good weekend.

Regards,

[REDACTED] s 7(2)(a)

Classification: PROTECTED

From: Darrin Newth
Sent: Friday, 28 October 2022 11:57 am
To: [REDACTED] s 7(2)(a)@westpac.co.nz>; Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: [REDACTED] s 7(2)(a)@westpac.co.nz>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal
Importance: High

Hi [REDACTED] s 7(2)(a)

Our CFO has just asked a couple of questions on this:

- a) Does this convenience fee only relate to our online portal. Ie: do people using credit card at our cashiers get charged a convenience fee Do people using other online services (building consents, traffic infringements etc) get charged this convenience fee

Yes, it only applies to the online portal

- b) Per the website blurb below – while it states 2.1% fee – also states a \$3.50 minimum. Can we guarantee that \$3.50 is not being charged?

We have picked this up. The fee was set up to be charged but we can find no evidence of it ever being applied because of the large payment values. We will be removing this minimum fee when we make the correction to 1.9%.

[REDACTED] s 7(2)(b)(ii)

Cheers D

From: [REDACTED] s 7(2)(a) @westpac.co.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 27 October 2022 4:17 pm
To: Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>; Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: [REDACTED] s 7(2)(a) @westpac.co.nz>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hi Glenn & Darrin,

Commercially sensitive & in-confidence

Thanks for your enquiry last week and Darrin for your time earlier today. We have conducted a rapid investigation and our findings are below.

Unfortunately, we have discovered an error in the Convenience Fee service:

- We are currently charging a fee of 2.1%, as displayed on the HCC payments page.
- We should be charging a fee of 1.9%, as per our contract.

Our preliminary investigation suggests this error has been in place since 2016, and we have estimated the total overcharging over this period to be approximately \$23,000 over 19,000 payments. The largest amount overcharged in the last 12 months for a single transaction has been \$1.36.

As a result, we have commenced work on fixing these errors, and expect the changes to be ready for HCC review in our test environment within the next week. Darrin, I note your request for a general fee audit and will also get this underway shortly.

Noting the very small amounts of money involved, the large number of payers, and the period of time over which this error occurred we are considering remediation options and I will provide an update soon.

We sincerely apologise for this error and the inconvenience it has caused HCC and its customers, and are fully committed to addressing this issue.

I note your LGOIMA request and have suggested answers below that I hope are helpful, although of course I fully respect HCC's right to respond as it sees fit.

Please note that we consider the information in this correspondence to be commercially sensitive and accordingly we request that if any party makes an application under the LGOIMA to obtain this correspondence or any information in it that we are advised in advance so we can make submissions on the appropriateness of any release prior to that occurring.

Regards,

[REDACTED] s 7(2)(a)

1. Why are Hutt City rate payers paying a higher fee than Porirua rate payers?

Westpac has identified this is a billing error and has established a team to investigate and fix the issue.

2. Has the council attempted to negotiate a lower fee with Westpac? If yes, I would like to request a copy of communication between the council and Westpac about this. If no, then why not?

As above, this is due to a billing error. HCC is a signatory to the All-of-Government banking services agreement for which MBIE negotiates on behalf of the State Service.

3. Has anyone raised the Westpac fee as a complaint with the council before? If yes, how many complaints and what dates were they raised.

[We cannot comment on this, other than note we do not believe it has been raised with us in the past]

[Redacted content]



Classification: PROTECTED

From: [Redacted] <[Redacted]@westpac.co.nz>
Sent: Thursday, October 20, 2022 5:15 PM
To: Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>; [Redacted] <[Redacted]@westpac.co.nz>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hello Glenn,

Just a quick note to say that we are investigating this with priority and will be back in touch early to mid-next week with an update.

I have [Redacted] in cc as he will take this forward next week as I am on annual leave.

Ngā mihi

[Redacted content]



Classification: PROTECTED

From: Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, October 19, 2022 11:03 AM
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@westpac.co.nz>
Cc: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal
Importance: High

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Westpac Group. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender.

Hi [REDACTED]

Please refer below.

We have received the LOGIMA query as outlined below, which we are obligated to respond to in a timely manner.

Your comments as to our fee's when compared to Porirua would be appreciated.

Thank you in anticipation.

Glenn

From: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 19 October 2022 10:12 AM
To: Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hi Glenn

Are you able to contact our relationship manager and see what they say in relation to the following

Thanks
Cheers D

Darrin Newth
Financial Accounting Manager

Hutt City Council, 30 Laings Road, Lower Hutt 5040
P: 04 570 6989 M: [REDACTED] W: www.huttcity.govt.nz



From: Jenny Livschitz <Jenny.Livschitz@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, 17 October 2022 12:39 pm
To: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>; Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: Alicia Andrews <Alicia.Andrews@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hi Darrin

Please see the LGOIMA request that has been raised below and requires a response. Can you please draft up a response please for my review.

If this is part of our Westpac contractual arrangements, then it would be helpful to our Westpac relationship manager to provide an answer here...ideally that they will reduce it immediately.

Thanks
Jenny

From: Jenny Livschitz
Sent: Monday, 17 October 2022 12:35 pm
To: Information Management Team <informationmanagementteam@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Thanks Susan, yes we can.

I will make contact with the relevant staff member and get back to you on this.

From: Information Management Team <informationmanagementteam@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, 17 October 2022 12:18 pm
To: Jenny Livschitz <Jenny.Livschitz@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Morena Jenny

We have received this LGOIMA below re surcharge for receiving online payments.

Is your team able to help with compiling a few words to answer this query?

Ngā mihi

Susan Sales

Ringā Āwhina Tāhūhū ki Te Koromatua | Senior Advisor

Te Kaunihera o Te Awa Kairangi | Hutt City Council, [30 Laings Road](https://www.huttcity.govt.nz), Private Bag 31912, Lower Hutt 5040, New Zealand
Paetukutuku: www.huttcity.govt.nz

Susan Sales

From: [REDACTED] s 7(2)(a)@westpac.co.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 27 October 2022 4:17 pm
To: Glenn Usoalii-Phillips; Darrin Newth
Cc: [REDACTED] s 7(2)(a)
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hi Glenn & Darrin,

Commercially sensitive & in-confidence

Thanks for your enquiry last week and Darrin for your time earlier today. We have conducted a rapid investigation and our findings are below.

Unfortunately, we have discovered an error in the Convenience Fee service:

- We are currently charging a fee of 2.1%, as displayed on the HCC payments page.
- We should be charging a fee of 1.9%, as per our contract.

Our preliminary investigation suggests this error has been in place since 2016, and we have estimated the total overcharging over this period to be approximately \$23,000 over 19,000 payments. The largest amount overcharged in the last 12 months for a single transaction has been \$1.36.

As a result, we have commenced work on fixing these errors, and expect the changes to be ready for HCC review in our test environment within the next week. Darrin, I note your request for a general fee audit and will also get this underway shortly.

Noting the very small amounts of money involved, the large number of payers, and the period of time over which this error occurred we are considering remediation options and I will provide an update soon.

We sincerely apologise for this error and the inconvenience it has caused HCC and its customers, and are fully committed to addressing this issue.

I note your LGOIMA request and have suggested answers below that I hope are helpful, although of course I fully respect HCC's right to respond as it sees fit.

Please note that we consider the information in this correspondence to be commercially sensitive and accordingly we request that if any party makes an application under the LGOIMA to obtain this correspondence or any information in it that we are advised in advance so we can make submissions on the appropriateness of any release prior to that occurring.

Regards,

[REDACTED] 7(2)(a)

1. Why are Hutt City rate payers paying a higher fee than Porirua rate payers?

Westpac has identified this is a billing error and has established a team to investigate and fix the issue.

2. Has the council attempted to negotiate a lower fee with Westpac? If yes, I would like to request a copy of communication between the council and Westpac about this. If no, then why not?

As above, this is due to a billing error. HCC is a signatory to the All-of-Government banking services agreement for which MBIE negotiates on behalf of the State Service.

3. Has anyone raised the Westpac fee as a complaint with the council before? If yes, how many complaints and what dates were they raised.

[We cannot comment on this, other than note we do not believe it has been raised with us in the past]

§ 7(2)(a)

§ 7(2)(a)



Classification: PROTECTED

From: § 7(2)(a) <§ 7(2)(a)@westpac.co.nz>
Sent: Thursday, October 20, 2022 5:15 PM
To: Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>; § 7(2)(a) <§ 7(2)(a)@westpac.co.nz>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hello Glenn,

Just a quick note to say that we are investigating this with priority and will be back in touch early to mid-next week with an update.

I have § 7(2)(a) in cc as he will take this forward next week as I am on annual leave.

Ngā mihi

§ 7(2)(a)

§ 7(2)(a)



[Westpac thought leadership](#) - specialist insights from industry and business leaders.

Classification: PROTECTED

From: Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, October 19, 2022 11:03 AM
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@westpac.co.nz>
Cc: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal
Importance: High

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Westpac Group. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender.

Hi [REDACTED]

Please refer below.

We have received the LOGIMA query as outlined below, which we are obligated to respond to in a timely manner.

Your comments as to our fee's when compared to Porirua would be appreciated.

Thank you in anticipation.

Glenn

From: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 19 October 2022 10:12 AM
To: Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hi Glenn

Are you able to contact our relationship manager and see what they say in relation to the following

Thanks
Cheers D

Darrin Newth
Financial Accounting Manager

Hutt City Council, 30 Laings Road, Lower Hutt 5040
P: 04 570 6989 **M:** [REDACTED] **W:** www.huttcity.govt.nz



From: Jenny Livschitz <Jenny.Livschitz@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, 17 October 2022 12:39 pm
To: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>; Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: Alicia Andrews <Alicia.Andrews@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hi Darrin

Please see the LGOIMA request that has been raised below and requires a response. Can you please draft up a response please for my review.

If this is part of our Westpac contractual arrangements, then it would be helpful to our Westpac relationship manager to provide an answer here...ideally that they will reduce it immediately.

Thanks
Jenny

From: Jenny Livschitz
Sent: Monday, 17 October 2022 12:35 pm
To: Information Management Team <informationmanagementteam@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Thanks Susan, yes we can.

I will make contact with the relevant staff member and get back to you on this.

From: Information Management Team <informationmanagementteam@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, 17 October 2022 12:18 pm
To: Jenny Livschitz <Jenny.Livschitz@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Morena Jenny

We have received this LGOIMA below re surcharge for receiving online payments.

Is your team able to help with compiling a few words to answer this query?

Ngā mihi

Susan Sales

Ringa Āwhina Tāhūhū ki Te Koromatua | Senior Advisor

From: ContactHCC <contact@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Friday, 14 October 2022 4:44 pm
To: Information Management Team <informationmanagementteam@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

From: Shaun McKenzie [REDACTED] >
Sent: Thursday, 13 October 2022 4:29 PM
To: ContactHCC <contact@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hi

I've noticed that both Hutt City Council and Porirua City Council both use the payments online portal for handling online payments. Both Councils also include a Westpac fee when using the online portal. Porirua City Council have an additional charge of 1.9%, while Hutt City Council is 2.1% (attached below are images from each councils payment page).

My questions are:

1. Why are Hutt City rate payers paying a higher fee than Porirua rate payers?
2. Has the council attempted to negotiate a lower fee with Westpac? If yes, I would like to request a copy of communication between the council and Westpac about this. If no, then why not?
3. Has anyone raised the Westpac fee as a complaint with the council before? If yes, how many complaints and what dates were they raised.

Regards
Shaun



Credit card payment

This service is provided by our bank, Westpac New Zealand Limited, in agreement with Porirua City Council. You do not have to be a Westpac customer to use this service.

Payment can be made with Visa or MasterCard credit cards.



Important

A **convenience fee** of 1.90% per transaction is applied by Westpac New Zealand Limited to transactions processed through this site. This fee appears as a separate transaction on your credit card statement and is referred to as "Westpac Convenience Fee". You should check with your card issuer for details about other fees or charges that may also apply, as this credit card transaction is carried out in terms of the arrangement between you and your card issuer.

If payment is made using a credit card issued outside New Zealand, any currency conversion will be done according to the terms and conditions of the card - there may be currency conversion fees charged by your card issuer.

Transactions made after 10:30PM New Zealand time will be processed by Porirua City Council on the following business day.

[Return to Porirua City Home Page](#)

Continue



Credit card payment

This service is provided by our bank, Westpac New Zealand Limited, in agreement with Hutt City Council. You do not have to be a Westpac customer to use this service.

Payment can be made with Visa or MasterCard credit cards.



Important

A **convenience fee** of 2.1% per transaction is applied by Westpac New Zealand Limited to transactions processed through this site. A minimum convenience fee of \$3.50 applies to transactions that fall below this threshold. Hutt City Council does not receive any part of this fee. This fee appears as a separate transaction on your credit card statement and is referred to as "Westpac Convenience Fee". You should check with your card issuer for details about other fees or charges that may also apply, as this credit card transaction is carried out in terms of the arrangement between you and your card issuer.

If payment is made using a credit card issued outside New Zealand, any currency conversion will be done according to the terms and conditions of the card - there may be currency conversion fees charged by your card issuer.

Transactions made after 10:30PM New Zealand time will be processed by Hutt City Council on the following business day.

[Return to Hutt City Home Page](#)

Continue

The contents of this email and any attachments are confidential and may be legally privileged. If you are not the intended recipient please advise the sender immediately and delete the email and attachments. Any use, dissemination, reproduction or distribution of this email and any attachments by anyone other than the intended recipient is prohibited.

Classification: PROTECTED

From: [REDACTED] s 7(2)(a)
Sent: Friday, November 4, 2022 12:41 PM
To: Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>; Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: [REDACTED] s 7(2)(a) <[\[REDACTED\]@westpac.co.nz](mailto:[REDACTED]@westpac.co.nz)>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Kia ora Glenn and Darrin,

Commercially sensitive and in-confidence

Please note update below:

Amending the website and the charge.

Please see below a link to a test site that shows the updated website, We have:

- 1) Amended the charge to 1.9% from 2.1%
- 2) Removed the minimum charge.

Test link:

[REDACTED] s 7(2)(b)(ii)

Can you please test this and confirm that you are happy with these changes - once I hear from you I will direct the team to put the changes live, and this will be in place early next week.

Transactional banking fee audit

I expect to get this to you early next week.

Remediation

As mentioned, Westpac is working through an remediation approach for the overcharge of the Convenience fee and would be grateful for feedback from Hutt City Council given how difficult it would be to refund the card payments.

We have established that since 2016, there were 19,000 transactions affected, totalling an amount of approximately \$23,000.

The largest amount overcharged in the last 12 months for a single transaction was \$1.36.

This is a hugely challenging scenario to try and address, given the following factors

- 1) Having a card number that was responsible for the transaction would not be enough to guarantee a refund. This is because the life of an average card is about 2-5 years at the most. There is a real likelihood that many of the cards will have expired and / or be closed, and therefore refunding all cards will not be possible.
- 2) Identification of the rate payers affected would need significant investigation and time.

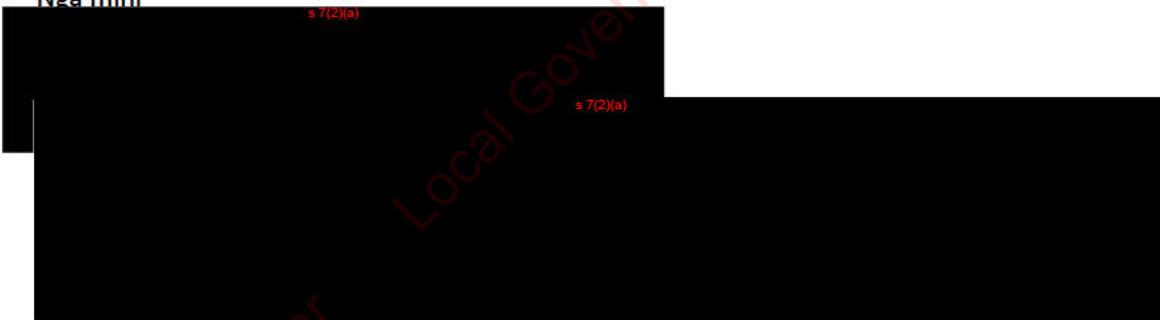
Given the additional point that the overcharge amounts are very small, we are thinking about alternative ways to ensure we support the affected rate payers, and suggest exploration of the following ideas:

- 1) Westpac, with Hutt City Council's guidance, would donate the overcharged amount to a charity or a cause that would benefit Hutt City Rate Payers.
 - a) The Financial Markets Authority and the Commerce Commission have endorsed the payment of refunds to charity in situations where account details are not held for impacted customers. This has been applied to amounts under NZD \$20.
- 2) Westpac could refund the amount to Hutt City Council who could then apply the credit to the relevant ratepayer account

I am more than happy to discuss this with you once you have had a chance to get some feedback internally.

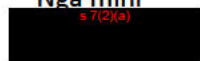
Let me know if you have any questions

Ngā mihi



[Westpac thought leadership](#) - specialist insights from industry and business leaders.

Ngā mihi



§ 7(2)(a)

§ 7(2)(a)



[Westpac thought leadership](#) - specialist insights from industry and business leaders.

Classification: PROTECTED

From: Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>

Sent: Thursday, November 3, 2022 8:00 PM

To: § 7(2)(a) <§ 7(2)(a)@westpac.co.nz>; Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>

Cc: § 7(2)(a) <§ 7(2)(a)@westpac.co.nz>

Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Importance: High

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Westpac Group. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender.

Hi § 7(2)(a)

Can you please advise of any updates to your email below from 27 October 2022.

Thanks

Glenn

Ngā mihi | Regards

Glenn

Glenn Usoalii'i-Phillips

Treasury Officer

Mobile: § 7(2)(a)

Email: glenn.usoalii-phillips@huttcity.govt.nz / treasury@huttcity.govt.nz

Hutt City Council, 30 Laings Road, Private Bag 31912, Lower Hutt 5040, New Zealand

T 04 570 6666, W www.huttcity.govt.nz F huttcitycouncil



From: § 7(2)(a) <§ 7(2)(a)@westpac.co.nz>

Sent: Friday, 28 October 2022 4:20 PM

To: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>; Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>

Cc: § 7(2)(a) <§ 7(2)(a)@westpac.co.nz>

Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hi Darrin,

Please see my responses below..

Have a good weekend.

Regards,

s 7(2)(a)

Classification: PROTECTED

From: Darrin Newth

Sent: Friday, 28 October 2022 11:57 am

To: s 7(2)(a) <[redacted]@westpac.co.nz>; Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>

Cc: s 7(2)(a) <[redacted]@westpac.co.nz>

Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Importance: High

Hi s 7(2)(a)

Our CFO has just asked a couple of questions on this:

- a) Does this convenience fee only relate to our online portal. Ie: do people using credit card at our cashiers get charged a convenience fee. Do people using other online services (building consents, traffic infringements etc) get charged this convenience fee

Yes, it only applies to the online portal

- b) Per the website blurb below – while it states 2.1% fee – also states a \$3.50 minimum. Can we guarantee that \$3.50 is not being charged?

We have picked this up. The fee was set up to be charged but we can find no evidence of it ever being applied because of the large payment values. We will be removing this minimum fee when we make the correction to 1.9%.

s 7(2)(b)(i)

Cheers D

From: s 7(2)(a) <[redacted]@westpac.co.nz>

Sent: Thursday, 27 October 2022 4:17 pm

To: Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>; Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>

Cc: s 7(2)(a) <[redacted]@westpac.co.nz>

Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hi Glenn & Darrin,

Commercially sensitive & in-confidence

Thanks for your enquiry last week and Darrin for your time earlier today. We have conducted a rapid investigation and our findings are below.

Unfortunately, we have discovered an error in the Convenience Fee service:

- We are currently charging a fee of 2.1%, as displayed on the HCC payments page.
- We should be charging a fee of 1.9%, as per our contract.

Our preliminary investigation suggests this error has been in place since 2016, and we have estimated the total overcharging over this period to be approximately \$23,000 over 19,000 payments. The largest amount overcharged in the last 12 months for a single transaction has been \$1.36.

As a result, we have commenced work on fixing these errors, and expect the changes to be ready for HCC review in our test environment within the next week. Darrin, I note your request for a general fee audit and will also get this underway shortly.

Noting the very small amounts of money involved, the large number of payers, and the period of time over which this error occurred we are considering remediation options and I will provide an update soon.

We sincerely apologise for this error and the inconvenience it has caused HCC and its customers, and are fully committed to addressing this issue.

I note your LGOIMA request and have suggested answers below that I hope are helpful, although of course I fully respect HCC's right to respond as it sees fit.

Please note that we consider the information in this correspondence to be commercially sensitive and accordingly we request that if any party makes an application under the LGOIMA to obtain this correspondence or any information in it that we are advised in advance so we can make submissions on the appropriateness of any release prior to that occurring.

Regards,

s 7(2)(a)

1. Why are Hutt City rate payers paying a higher fee than Porirua rate payers?

Westpac has identified this is a billing error and has established a team to investigate and fix the issue.

2. Has the council attempted to negotiate a lower fee with Westpac? If yes, I would like to request a copy of communication between the council and Westpac about this. If no, then why not?

As above, this is due to a billing error. HCC is a signatory to the All-of-Government banking services agreement for which MBIE negotiates on behalf of the State Service.

3. Has anyone raised the Westpac fee as a complaint with the council before? If yes, how many complaints and what dates were they raised.

[We cannot comment on this, other than note we do not believe it has been raised with us in the past]

s 7(2)(a)



Classification: PROTECTED

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@westpac.co.nz>
Sent: Thursday, October 20, 2022 5:15 PM
To: Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>; [redacted] <[redacted]@westpac.co.nz>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hello Glenn,

Just a quick note to say that we are investigating this with priority and will be back in touch early to mid-next week with an update.

I have [redacted] in cc as he will take this forward next week as I am on annual leave.

Ngā mihi

[redacted]

[redacted]



[Westpac thought leadership](#) - specialist insights from industry and business leaders.

Classification: PROTECTED

From: Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, October 19, 2022 11:03 AM
To: [redacted] <[redacted]@westpac.co.nz>
Cc: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal
Importance: High

Hi [REDACTED]

Please refer below.

We have received the LOGIMA query as outlined below, which we are obligated to respond to in a timely manner.

Your comments as to our fee's when compared to Porirua would be appreciated.

Thank you in anticipation.

Glenn

From: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 19 October 2022 10:12 AM
To: Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hi Glenn

Are you able to contact our relationship manager and see what they say in relation to the following

Thanks
Cheers D

Darrin Newth
Financial Accounting Manager

Hutt City Council, 30 Laings Road, Lower Hutt 5040
P: 04 570 6989 M: [REDACTED] W: www.huttcity.govt.nz



From: Jenny Livschitz <Jenny.Livschitz@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, 17 October 2022 12:39 pm
To: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>; Glenn Usoalii-Phillips <Glenn.Usoalii-Phillips@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: Alicia Andrews <Alicia.Andrews@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hi Darrin

Please see the LGOIMA request that has been raised below and requires a response. Can you please draft up a response please for my review.

If this is part of our Westpac contractual arrangements, then it would be helpful to our Westpac relationship manager to provide an answer here...ideally that they will reduce it immediately.

Thanks
Jenny

From: Jenny Livschitz
Sent: Monday, 17 October 2022 12:35 pm
To: Information Management Team <informationmanagementteam@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Thanks Susan, yes we can.

I will make contact with the relevant staff member and get back to you on this.

From: Information Management Team <informationmanagementteam@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, 17 October 2022 12:18 pm
To: Jenny Livschitz <Jenny.Livschitz@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Morena Jenny

We have received this LGOIMA below re surcharge for receiving online payments.

Is your team able to help with compiling a few words to answer this query?

Ngā mihi

Susan Sales

Ringa Āwhina Tāhūhū ki Te Koromatua | Senior Advisor

Te Kaunihera o Te Awa Kairangi | Hutt City Council, [30 Laings Road](#), Private Bag 31912, Lower Hutt 5040, New Zealand
Paetukutuku: www.huttcity.govt.nz

From: ContactHCC <contact@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Friday, 14 October 2022 4:44 pm
To: Information Management Team <informationmanagementteam@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

From: Shaun McKenzie [REDACTED] >
Sent: Thursday, 13 October 2022 4:29 PM
To: ContactHCC <contact@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hi

Susan Sales

From: Information Management Team
Sent: Monday, 17 October 2022 12:48 pm
To: Susan Sales
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

From: ContactHCC <contact@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Friday, 14 October 2022 4:44 pm
To: Information Management Team <informationmanagementteam@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

From: Shaun McKenzie [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 13 October 2022 4:29 PM
To: ContactHCC <contact@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Hi

I've noticed that both Hutt City Council and Porirua City Council both use the payments online portal for handling online payments. Both Councils also include a Westpac fee when using the online portal. Porirua City Council have an additional charge of 1.9%, while Hutt City Council is 2.1% (attached below are images from each councils payment page).

My questions are:

1. Why are Hutt City rate payers paying a higher fee than Porirua rate payers?
2. Has the council attempted to negotiate a lower fee with Westpac? If yes, I would like to request a copy of communication between the council and Westpac about this. If no, then why not?
3. Has anyone raised the Westpac fee as a complaint with the council before? If yes, how many complaints and what dates were they raised.

Regards
Shaun



Credit card payment

This service is provided by our bank, Westpac New Zealand Limited, in agreement with Porirua City Council. You do not have to be a Westpac customer to use this service.

Payment can be made with Visa or MasterCard credit cards.



Important

A **convenience fee** of 1.90% per transaction is applied by Westpac New Zealand Limited to transactions processed through this site. This fee appears as a separate transaction on your credit card statement and is referred to as "Westpac Convenience Fee". You should check with your card issuer for details about other fees or charges that may also apply, as this credit card transaction is carried out in terms of the arrangement between you and your card issuer.

If payment is made using a credit card issued outside New Zealand, any currency conversion will be done according to terms and conditions of the card - there may be currency conversion fees charged by your card issuer.

Transactions made after 10:30PM New Zealand time will be processed by Porirua City Council on the following business day.

[Return to Porirua City Home Page](#)

Continue



Credit card payment

This service is provided by our bank, Westpac New Zealand Limited, in agreement with Hutt City Council. You do not have to be a Westpac customer to use this service.

Payment can be made with Visa or MasterCard credit cards.



Important

A **convenience fee** of 2.1% per transaction is applied by Westpac New Zealand Limited to transactions processed through this site. A minimum convenience fee of \$3.50 applies to transactions that fall below this threshold. Hutt City Council does not receive any part of this fee. This fee appears as a separate transaction on your credit card statement and is referred to as "Westpac Convenience Fee". You should check with your card issuer for details about other fees or charges that may also apply, as this credit card transaction is carried out in terms of the arrangement between you and your card issuer.

If payment is made using a credit card issued outside New Zealand, any currency conversion will be done according to the terms and conditions of the card - there may be currency conversion fees charged by your card issuer.

Transactions made after 10:30PM New Zealand time will be processed by Hutt City Council on the following business day.

[Return to Hutt City Home Page](#)

Continue

Susan Sales

From: Susan Sales
Sent: Tuesday, 1 November 2022 4:51 pm
To: Alicia Andrews
Cc: Darrin Newth; Bina Govind
Subject: RE: Westpac fee when using online rates payment portal

Thanks Alicia

Yes, we always put LGOIMA responses on our website (unless they are private) – my job to do this.
See <https://www.huttcity.govt.nz/council/contact-us/make-an-official-information-act-request/proactive-releases>

Darrin sent me the info below today. But I probably won't get the reply prepared and out until early next week due to other priorities. I will ensure I pass draft response through Caryn and Jenny if it could be contentious. Should anyone else in HCC be advised before it goes public?

Regards, Susan Sales

Ngā mihi

Susan Sales

Ringa Āwhina Tāhūhū ki Te Koromatua | Senior Advisor

Te Kaunihera o Te Awa Kairangi | Hutt City Council, [30 Laings Road](#), Private Bag 31912, Lower Hutt 5040, New Zealand
Paetukutuku: www.huttcity.govt.nz

From: Alicia Andrews <Alicia.Andrews@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 1 November 2022 3:37 pm
To: Bina Govind <Bina.Govind@huttcity.govt.nz>; Susan Sales <Susan.Sales@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: Westpac fee when using online rates payment portal

Hi Bina, Susan

We are releasing this LGOIMA response that will be potentially be contentious and I'm keen that we are proactive about releasing the information. [@Susan Sales](#) – do we have somewhere on the website where we can publish LGOIMA responses? And what are your thoughts on this?

Thanks, Alicia

Alicia Andrews

Finance Transaction Services Manager

Hutt City Council, 30 Laings Road, Lower Hutt 5040

P: 04 570 6666 M: [REDACTED] W: www.huttcity.govt.nz



From: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 1 November 2022 3:13 pm
To: Alicia Andrews <Alicia.Andrews@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@westpac.co.nz](mailto:[REDACTED]@westpac.co.nz)>
Subject: FW: Westpac fee when using online rates payment portal

Hi Alicia

We have approved the release of the LGOIMA request – so should be out shortly.

Therefore as per your earlier email – in terms of briefing the team and putting something on the website – should be OK to go ahead

[REDACTED] – any further updates on this. Assume the main thing of interest will be

- a) When the fix has been done
- b) Around any potential refunds to clients

Cheers D

Darrin Newth

Financial Accounting Manager

Hutt City Council, 30 Laings Road, Lower Hutt 5040

P: 04 570 6989 M: [REDACTED] W: www.huttcity.govt.nz



IMPORTANT: The information contained in this e-mail message may be legally privileged or confidential. The information is intended only for the recipient named in the e-mail message. If the reader of this e-mail message is not the intended recipient, you are notified that any use, copying or distribution of this e-mail message is prohibited. If you have received this e-mail message in error, please notify the sender immediately. Thank you

From: Jo Miller <Jo.Miller@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 1 November 2022 2:42 pm
To: Jenny Livschitz <Jenny.Livschitz@huttcity.govt.nz>
Cc: Darrin Newth <Darrin.Newth@huttcity.govt.nz>; Alicia Andrews <Alicia.Andrews@huttcity.govt.nz>; Caryn Ellis <Caryn.Ellis@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: Re: Westpac fee when using online rates payment portal

Thanks for the detailed information on this, much appreciated . Jo

Ngā mihi nui

Jo Miller
Tumu Whakarae
Chief Executive Officer

Hutt City Council, 30 Laings Road, Lower Hutt 5010, New Zealand

T: 04 570 6773 | **M:** [REDACTED]
W: www.huttcity.govt.nz

Follow me on Twitter [@jomillernz](https://twitter.com/jomillernz)



On 31/10/2022, at 4:51 PM, Jenny Livschitz <Jenny.Livschitz@huttcity.govt.nz> wrote:

Hi Jo

We have recently received an information request from Shaun McKenzie relating to the fee our bankers are charging on credit card transactions (2.1%) in comparison to that charged for Porirua City Council (1.9%). After contacting our bankers, we have discovered that there is in fact an error in the pricing structure being applied. As signatories to the All of Government banking services contract the rate should be 1.9%.

Westpac preliminary investigation suggests this error has been in place since 2016, and have estimated the total overcharging over this period to be approximately \$23,000 over 19,000 payments. The largest amount overcharged in the last 12 months for a single transaction has been \$1.36. [This would equate to a person paying \$680 rates on their credit card and being overcharged 0.2%]

Steps are in place to correct this error going forward and Westpac have apologised for this error.

Noting the very small amounts of money involved, the large number of payers, and the period of time over which this error occurred Westpac are considering remediation options and will provide us with an update soon.

We are proposing to respond to the LGOIMA request as follows:

1. Why are Hutt City rate payers paying a higher fee than Porirua rate payers?
Westpac has identified this is a billing error and has established a team to investigate and fix the issue. We expect the fee will be reduced to 1.9% in the coming weeks to align with that of Porirua City Council and other members of the "All-Of-Government banking services agreements".
2. Has the council attempted to negotiate a lower fee with Westpac? If yes, I would like to request a copy of communication between the council and Westpac about this. If no, then why not?
HCC is a signatory to the All-of-Government banking services agreement for which MBIE negotiates on our behalf. As such, all fees should be consistent for all parties under that agreement.
3. Has anyone raised the Westpac fee as a complaint with the council before? If yes, how many complaints and what dates were they raised.

To our knowledge, we have had no complaints in relation to the fees being charged by Westpac for Hutt City Council transactions compared to other Council charges. Westpac have advised, the largest amount overcharged in the last 12 months for a single transaction has been approximately \$1 36.

Ngā mihi

Jenny Livschitz

Kaihautū Ahumoni | Group Chief Financial Officer

Te Kaunihera o Te Awa Kairangi | Hutt City Council, 30 Laings Road, Private Bag 31912, Lower Hutt 5040, New Zealand

Kawereore s 7(2)(a), Paetukutuku www.huttcity.govt.nz

Susan Sales

From: Information Management Team
Sent: Monday, 17 October 2022 1:19 pm
To: Jenny Livschitz
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Thank you 😊

Ngā mihi

Susan Sales

Ringa Āwhina Tāhūhū ki Te Koromatua | Senior Advisor

Te Kaunihera o Te Awa Kairangi | Hutt City Council, [30 Laings Road](#), Private Bag 31912, Lower Hutt 5040, New Zealand
Paetukutuku: www.huttcity.govt.nz

From: Jenny Livschitz <Jenny.Livschitz@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, 17 October 2022 12:35 pm
To: Information Management Team <informationmanagementteam@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Thanks Susan, yes we can.

I will make contact with the relevant staff member and get back to you on this.

From: Information Management Team <informationmanagementteam@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, 17 October 2022 12:18 pm
To: Jenny Livschitz <Jenny.Livschitz@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Morena Jenny

We have received this LGOIMA below re surcharge for receiving online payments.

Is your team able to help with compiling a few words to answer this query?

Ngā mihi

Susan Sales

Susan Sales

From: Information Management Team
Sent: Monday, 17 October 2022 1:19 pm
To: Jenny Livschitz
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Thank you 😊

Ngā mihi

Susan Sales

Ringa Āwhina Tāhūhū ki Te Koromatua | Senior Advisor

Te Kaunihera o Te Awa Kairangi | Hutt City Council, [30 Laings Road](#), Private Bag 31912, Lower Hutt 5040, New Zealand
Paetukutuku: www.huttcity.govt.nz

From: Jenny Livschitz <Jenny.Livschitz@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, 17 October 2022 12:35 pm
To: Information Management Team <informationmanagementteam@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Thanks Susan, yes we can.

I will make contact with the relevant staff member and get back to you on this.

From: Information Management Team <informationmanagementteam@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, 17 October 2022 12:18 pm
To: Jenny Livschitz <Jenny.Livschitz@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Westpac fee when using online payment portal

Morena Jenny

We have received this LGOIMA below re surcharge for receiving online payments.

Is your team able to help with compiling a few words to answer this query?

Ngā mihi

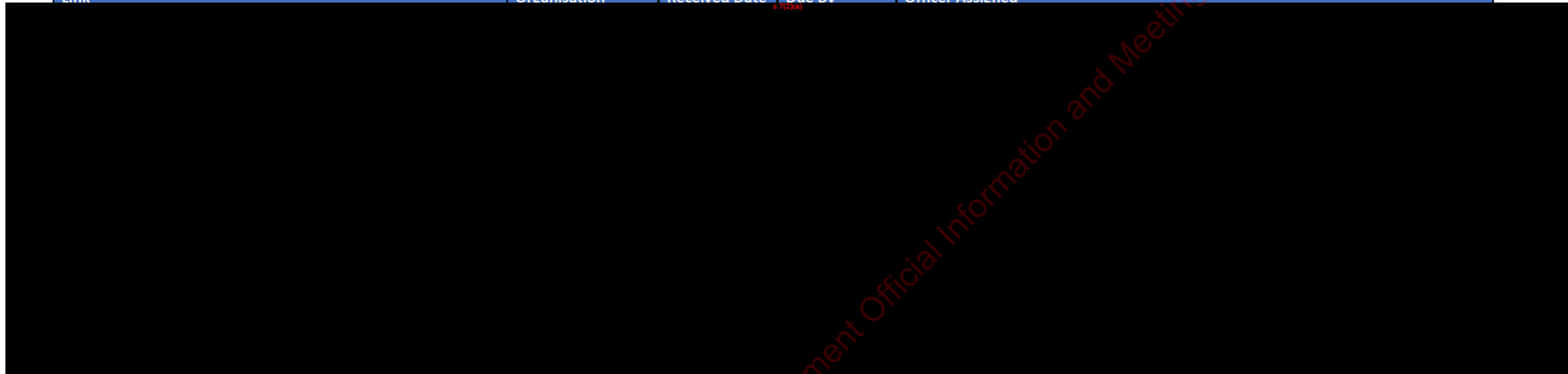
Susan Sales

From: Susan Sales
Sent: Monday, 14 November 2022 3:31 pm
To: Jekkie Suwanposee <Jekkie.Suwanposee@huttcity.govt.nz>; __CLT <CLT@huttcity.govt.nz>; Communications <Communications@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: LGOIMA information request summary for 14 November 2022

Kia ora everyone

Here is the list of all active LGOIMA requests as at 14 November 2022:

Link	Organisation	Received Date	Due By	Officer Assigned
------	--------------	---------------	--------	------------------



Active Privacy Act requests:

We have 2 active requests for information under the Privacy Act.

Here is the list of LGOIMAs that have been completed since 7 November 2022:

Link	Organisation	Received Date	Date Due	Completion Date	Officer Assigned
Shaun McKenzie - Westpac surcharge fee for online payments	Individual	17/10/2022	11/11/2022	8/11/2022	Susan Sales;#170;#Jenny Livschitz;#55;#Darrin Newth;#476

Ngā mihi

Susan Sales

Ringa Āwhina Tāhūhū ki Te Koromatua | Senior Advisor

Released under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act

From: Susan Sales
Sent: Monday, 17 October 2022 3:45 pm
To: Jekkie Suwanposee <Jekkie.Suwanposee@huttcity.govt.nz>; __CLT <CLT@huttcity.govt.nz>; Communications <Communications@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: LGOIMA information request summary for 17 October 2022

Kia ora everyone

Here is the list of all active LGOIMA requests as at 17 October 2022:

Link	Organisation	Received Date	Date Due	Officer Assigned
Shaun McKenzie - Westpac surcharge fee for online payments	Individual	17/10/2022	11/11/2022	Susan Sales;#170;#Jenny Livschitz;#55

Active Privacy Act requests:

We have 3 active requests for information under the Privacy Act.

Here is the list of LGOIMAs that have been completed since 11 October 2022:

Link	Organisation	Received Date	Date Due	Completion Date	Officer Assigned
------	--------------	---------------	----------	-----------------	------------------

Ngā mihi

Susan Sales

Ringa Āwhina Tāhūhū ki Te Koromatua | Senior Advisor

Te Kaunihera o Te Awa Kairangi | Hutt City Council, [30 Lains Road](#), Private Bag 31912, Lower Hutt 5040, New Zealand
Paetukutuku: www.huttcity.govt.nz

From: Susan Sales
Sent: Tuesday, 25 October 2022 3:58 pm
To: Jekkie Suwanposee <Jekkie.Suwanposee@huttcity.govt.nz>; __CLT <CLT@huttcity.govt.nz>; Communications <Communications@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: LGOIMA information request summary for 25 October 2022

Kia ora everyone

Here is the list of all active LGOIMA requests as at 25 October 2022:

Link	Organisation	Received Date	Date Due	Completion Date	Officer Assigned
Shaun McKenzie - Westpac surcharge fee for online payments	Individual	17/10/2022	11/11/2022		Susan Sales:#170:#Jenny Livschitz:#55

Active Privacy Act requests:

We have 3 active requests for information under the Privacy Act.

Here is the list of LGOIMAs that have been completed since 17 October 2022:

Link	Organisation	Received Date	Date Due	Completion Date	Officer Assigned
------	--------------	---------------	----------	-----------------	------------------

Ngā mihi

Susan Sales

Ringa Āwhina Tāhūhū ki Te Koromatua | Senior Advisor

Te Kaunihera o Te Awa Kairangi | Hutt City Council, [30 Laings Road](#), Private Bag 31912, Lower Hutt 5040, New Zealand
Paetukutuku: www.huttcity.govt.nz

From: Susan Sales

Sent: Monday, 7 November 2022 6:23 pm

To: Jekkie Suwanposee <Jekkie.Suwanposee@huttcity.govt.nz>; __CLT <CLT@huttcity.govt.nz>; Communications <Communications@huttcity.govt.nz>

Subject: LGOIMA information request summary for 7 November 2022

Kia ora everyone

Here is the list of all active LGOIMA requests as at 7 November 2022:

Link	Organisation	Received Date	Due By	Officer Assigned
[Redacted]				
Shaun McKenzie - Westpac surcharge fee for online				
[Redacted]				

Active Privacy Act requests:

We have 2 active requests for information under the Privacy Act.

Here is the list of LGOIMAs that have been completed since 31 October 2022:

Link	Organisation	Received Date	Date Due	Completion Date	Officer Assigned
[Redacted]					

Ngā mihi

Susan Sales

Ringa Āwhina Tāhūhū ki Te Koromatua | Senior Advisor

Te Kaunihera o Te Awa Kairangi | Hutt City Council, [30 Laings Road](#), Private Bag 31912, Lower Hutt 5040, New Zealand
Paetukutuku: www.huttcity.govt.nz

Released under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act

From: Susan Sales
Sent: Monday, 31 October 2022 5:44 pm
To: Jekkie Suwanposee <Jekkie.Suwanposee@huttcity.govt.nz>; Communications <Communications@huttcity.govt.nz>; __CLT <CLT@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: LGOIMA information request summary for 31 October 2022

Kia ora everyone

Here is the list of all active LGOIMA requests as at 31 October 2022:

Link	Organisation	Received Date	Final Due	Completion Date	Officer Assigned
Shaun McKenzie - Westpac surcharge fee for online payments	Individual	17/10/2022	11/11/2022		Susan Sales;#170;#Jenny Livschitz;#55

Active Privacy Act requests:

We have 3 active requests for information under the Privacy Act.

Here is the list of LGOIMAs that have been completed since 25 October 2022:

Link	Organisation	Received Date	Final Due	Completion Date	Officer Assigned
------	--------------	---------------	-----------	-----------------	------------------

Ngā mihi

Susan Sales

Ringa Āwhina Tāhūhū ki Te Koromatua | Senior Advisor

Te Kaunihera o Te Awa Kairangi | Hutt City Council, [30 Laings Road](#), Private Bag 31912, Lower Hutt 5040, New Zealand
Paetukutuku: www.huttcity.govt.nz

Released under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act