

8 November 2022

Leigh Sutton

7(2)(a)

Tēnā koe Leigh

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

We refer to your correspondence of 4 October 2022, to Bruce Hodgins, in which you question the pre-election removal of some local publications from Hutt City Council libraries.

Council resources, including libraries, are not to be used, or perceived to be used, to promote the election of specific candidates in local body elections.

In the lead-up to this year's elections, Hutt City Council officials became aware that the Stokes Valley Times, Taita Times and Vibrant Hutt magazines contained articles solely focused on Independent United Hutt Candidates. Accordingly, the publications were being used in a way that promoted particular candidates, and they lacked the balanced reporting expected for publications available through Council premises in a pre-election period.

This lack of balanced reporting resulted in local hub managers being instructed to remove copies of the Stokes Valley Times, Taita Times and Vibrant Hutt publications from Council facilities. This instruction applied only during the pre-election period.

It is unlikely that removing these editions of the publications from the Council's libraries had a significant impact either commercially or on free speech. Council facilities are only one venue by which publications may be distributed to the community, and we are confident that the publications in question would have been readily available through other venues.

Nāku noa, nā



Susan Sales

**Senior Advisor, Official Information and Privacy**