



15 April 2024

Emily Hughes

Dear Emily Hughes

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

We refer to your email to the Council of 28 March 2024 for:

Please provide for the 2023 calendar year:

1. *A list of all payments from the Council group (i.e. including any CCOs) to Taituarā*
2. *For each payment:*
 - a. *the date, invoice number, and what the payment was for* and*
 - b. *whether it was recovered (or deducted from the pay) from the relevant employee enjoying the membership or services related to the same.*

Given the nature of Taituarā as a membership organisation – in effect the employment union for local government managers – if membership dues are not recovered or deducted, please provide:

- a. *the reasoning (if any) for not deducting the amounts (i.e. Why should ratepayers pay for a private organisation/benefit?) and*
- b. *whether the Council does this for any other employment union or professional/networking association. If so, which ones?*

If the Council considers that the membership for Council officers is as part of their role at the Council (and therefore not for private benefit) please provide this information and explain how Taituarā is not therefore treated as a CCO under s 6(1) of the Local Government Act 2002 for the purposes of the Council group's statutory reporting.



Response:

Please find attached a document setting out Council payments to Taituara (NZ Society of Local Government Managers) for the 2023 calendar year.

What is Taituarā?

Taituarā is an incorporated society. It is the professional body for local government managers and staff. Membership is voluntary rather than a requirement as is the case for example with lawyers, accountants etc. Taituara is not a union and play no role in the negotiation of employment contracts or employment relations for any individual or group within the sector.

Turning to their status under the Local Government Act. Taituarā does not meet the legal definition of a CCO. It is the individual not the council that is a member of Taituarā. No local authority or group of local authorities own or control 50 percent or more of the voting rights at any meeting of Taituarā, nor does any local authority or group of local authorities have the right to appoint 50 percent or more of the members of our governing body.

Payments to Taituarā

Some of the invoices relate to payment of the annual sector good levy. The levy funds the work they do on behalf of the sector including the development of guides and resources to help the sector implement legislation and, working with central government and its agencies to ensure legislation is workable (for example, making a submission on a Bill or discussion document), and so on. Their submissions are matters of public record. For example, any submission to a piece of legislation or select committee inquiry will be on the Parliamentary website. But in any case, the most recent are on a publicly available page of their website (<https://taituara.org.nz/advocacy>).

These resources and guidance are put a council-access-only webpage – largely to prevent the private sector from leveraging for private profit the intellectual property that the sector paid to develop. Any person may view the front page of what we call our toolkit at <https://taituara.org.nz/lg-sectorgood-toolkit>. Here is an overview of what’s on that site:

- the electoral code of good practice and associated electoral resources ,

- our suite of long-term planning guidance,
- the annual cost adjusters report
- the suite of legal compliance modules – flowcharts that help the sector step through various legal processes (such as issuing a building consent)
- a suite of resources on financial management (rating reviews, fees and charges, we have a guide to the Rating Act in development)
- resources to support the Governance function.

Many of the invoices that fall in scope of the request relate to various attendances at Taituarā events. These are training and professional development opportunities:

- some cover particular skills (for example – leadership development)
- others might cover topics specific to local government (for example the LTP training or webinars on topics such as the upcoming webinars on voluntary buyouts, delegations, sovereign citizens etc)
- others are opportunities for occupational groups to meet and discuss topics of common interest or concern (Finance Forum is a good example of this).

These are all undertaken on a user pays basis. Programmes are online – and, unless stated otherwise, are open to anyone who pays the fee. Councils sending staff on these opportunities do so to provide them with training and knowledge to do their jobs well – just as any good employer would do. It is generally unusual for a council (or other employer for that matter) to recover that cost from an employee.

And then there will be an invoice or invoices relating to the payment of Taituarā memberships. A full membership currently costs \$275 per year plus GST. Whether the council or the individual pays the membership is a matter for the council and employee to negotiate. Across the sector, our understanding is around 95 percent of our members have their membership fees paid by council. We observe that it is common practice in councils (and other organisations) to include the payment of one member fee for a professional body as a term of employment and that this policy generally extends to other bodies such as the Law Society, Apopo, Chartered Accountants ANZ, LIANZA etc.

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

Please note that this response to your information request may be published on Hutt City Council's website. Please refer to the following link:
www.huttcity.govt.nz/council/contactus/make-an-official-information-act-request/proactive-releases

Yours sincerely

Philip Rossiter

Senior Advisor, Official Information and Privacy

Main Accounts Payable Account						
Date	Type	Reference	Allocated Amt	Narrative (What the payment was for)	Recovered	
9/01/2023	APINV	INV-0022765	115.00	Advertising with LG Jobs Board - Jan 2023	NA - not a membership	
10/01/2023	APINV	INV-0022767	115.00	Advertising with LG Jobs Board - Jan 2023	NA - not a membership	
18/01/2023	APINV	INV-00011548	316.25	Taituara Full Membership to June 2023	Not recovered from st	
7/02/2023	APINV	16156	1,552.50	6 seats to Workshop: Collaborative Leadership for Future - Ta Papa 24 Feb 23	NA - not a membership	
15/02/2023	APINV	INV-0022995	115.00	Advertising with LG Jobs Board - Feb 2023	NA - not a membership	
21/02/2023	APINV	16274	724.50	1 seat to Infrastructure Forum - Rydgers Hotel 24 May 23	NA - not a membership	
3/03/2023	APINV	16345	448.50	1 seat to Workshop: Collaborative Leadership for Future - Ta Papa 24 Feb 23	NA - not a membership	
20/03/2023	APINV	INV-00011598	158.13	Taituara Full Membership to June 2023	Not recovered from st	
21/03/2023	APINV	16517	724.50	1 seat to LTP Roadshow - The Road to 2024 - PN Conference Centre 21 Mar 23	NA - not a membership	
11/04/2023	APINV	16684	621.00	1 seat to Representative Review Forum - Ryger Hotel 29 May 23	NA - not a membership	
17/04/2023	APINV	16714	1,265.00	1 seat to Online: Introduction to Policy Fundamentals 26 Apr 23 - 22 May 23	NA - not a membership	
18/04/2023	APINV	INV-16725A	1,564.00	8 seats to Gala Dinner - TSB Arena 8 Jun 23	NA - not a membership	
18/04/2023	APINV	INV-00011626	1,564.00	8 seats to Gala Dinner - TSB Arena 8 Jun 23	NA - not a membership	
27/04/2023	APINV	16775	21,562.50	5 seats to LG Accelerated Leadership Programme - 9 Jun 23 - 28 Nov 23	NA - not a membership	
10/05/2023	APINV	16948	287.50	1 seat to Webinar: What happened to the water legislation? On 28 June 23	NA - not a membership	
14/06/2023	APINV	17198	287.50	1 seat to Webinar: What happened to the water legislation? On 28 June 23	NA - not a membership	
19/06/2023	APCREDIT	CN-00011675	- 2,875.00	Credit against HCC0016489 TAITUARA NZ SOC - Accelerated Leadership Programme	NA - not a membership	
3/07/2023	APINV	INV-00011729	316.25	Taituara Full Membership to June 2024	Not recovered from st	
4/07/2023	APINV	INV-00011814	5,376.25	17 x Taituara Full Membership to June 2024	Not recovered from st	
14/08/2023	APINV	INV-00012081	27,907.31	SectorGood Work Programme - Annual subscription 1 Jul 23 to 30 Jun 24	NA - not a membership	
15/08/2023	APINV	17701	1,667.50	1 seat to Online: Writing for Local Government Decisions 7 Nov 23 - 5 Dec 23	NA - not a membership	
21/08/2023	APINV	17745	1,667.50	1 seat to Online: Writing for Local Government Decisions 7 Nov 23 - 5 Dec 23	NA - not a membership	
25/10/2023	APINV	INV-00012220	316.25	Taituara Full Membership to June 2024	Not recovered from st	
8/11/2023	APINV	INV-00012235	316.25	Taituara Full Membership to June 2024	Not recovered from st	
30/11/2023	APINV	INV-18282	373.75	1 seat to Webinar - The Next Three Years 12 Dec 23	NA - not a membership	
21/12/2023	APINV	INV-00012267	316.25	Taituara Full Membership to June 2024	Not recovered from st	
			66,803.19			
Conference Account						
Date	Type	Reference	Allocated Amt	Narrative (What the payment was for)	Recovered	
19/10/2023	APINV	TAITUARA23-1	1,368.50	Taituara Annual; Conference 2023 - registration fee and Hawkes Bay Tour	NA - not a membership	
19/10/2023	APINV	TAITUARA23-1	1,368.50	Taituara Annual; Conference 2023 - registration fee and Hawkes Bay Tour	NA - not a membership	
			2,737.00			
Purchase Card						
19/01/2023	Pcard		287.50	1 seat for Webinar: Living with the LTP on 3 February 2023	NA - not a membership	
19/04/2023	Pcard		1,104.00	1 seat to attend Strategic Finance Forum through Taitara.	NA - not a membership	
17/06/2023	Pcard		287.50	1 seat to attend Taituara Training Course 21 June 2023	NA - not a membership	
11/07/2023	Pcard		333.50	1 seat for Webinar: Living with the LTP on 3 February 2023	NA - not a membership	
5/07/2023	Pcard		287.50	1 seat to attend Taituara Local Alcohol webinar July 2023	NA - not a membership	
5/07/2023	Pcard		287.50	1 seat to attend Taituara Bylaws webinar	NA - not a membership	
2/08/2023	Pcard		333.50	1 seat to attend Taituara online training - LTP Starter Course 17 August 2023	NA - not a membership	
30/08/2023	Pcard		333.50	1 seat to attend Taituara online training - CD writing 30 August 2023	NA - not a membership	
23/08/2023	Pcard		373.75	1 seat to attend Taituara webinar on Legislative changes and the 2024 LTP on 23 August 2023	NA - not a membership	
27/10/2023	Pcard		1,368.50	1 seat to attend Taituara Member - Annual Conference and tour of the Hawkes Bay Region	NA - not a membership	
19/10/2023	Pcard		1,265.00	1 seat to attend Taituara Funding and Rating forum in Wellington 1 and 2 November 2023	NA - not a membership	
19/10/2023	Pcard		1,092.50	1 seat to attend Taituara Funding and Rating forum in Wellington 1 and 2 November 2023	NA - not a membership	
15/11/2023	Pcard		718.75	1 seat via Conference Innovators - Chch - to attend Taituara Conference in Hamilton 22-24 November 2023	NA - not a membership	
			8,073.00			