



11 June 2026

Warwick Jones

s7(2)(a)

Tēnā koe Warwick,

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

We refer to your official information request dated 13 May 2026, seeking further information about Council's herbicide use practices and controls.

We have addressed each of your questions below.

1. *Does Council require public notification, signage, or exclusion periods following herbicide application in publicly accessible areas such as parks, playgrounds, reserves, sports fields, berms, or footpaths?*

ANSWER: Council's contractors use appropriate signage for all spraying activities in publicly accessible areas. Herbicide application is carried out in accordance with GrowSafe requirements, industry best practice, and the manufacturer's instructions for each product, including any specified exclusion periods and safety controls set out in the product label and Safety Data Sheet.

2. *Are there any additional operational restrictions, buffer zones, or controls relating to herbicide use near sensitive environments such as playgrounds, schools, waterways, wetlands, or ecologically sensitive areas?*

ANSWER: When working in or near sensitive environments such as playgrounds, schools, waterways, wetlands, and other ecologically sensitive areas, a range of operational controls are applied.

This includes avoiding spraying in certain locations where appropriate, and otherwise complying with GrowSafe requirements, product label instructions, manufacturer guidance, and Safety Data Sheets. These set out the relevant controls for safe use, including buffer distances, application methods, and environmental protections.

3. *The response mentioned that plant-based alternatives (fatty acids and plant sterols) are encouraged where suitable. Are you able to provide examples of where these alternatives are currently being used operationally in place of conventional herbicides?*

ANSWER: Plant-based alternatives, such as those derived from fatty acids and plant sterols, are primarily used in and around playground areas where a lower-risk treatment option is considered appropriate. In some situations, particularly where specialised playground safety surfacing is present, manual hand weeding is not a practical or effective control method. In those cases, these products provide a suitable operational alternative to conventional herbicides. However, Council currently has no plans to extend the use of these alternatives more broadly, due to their higher cost and lower efficacy compared to conventional herbicides.

4. *How does Council monitor or audit contractor compliance with herbicide application requirements, environmental controls, and qualification standards?*

ANSWER: Contractor compliance is managed through Council's contractual arrangements. Contractors are required to hold appropriate qualifications, including GrowSafe certification, and to undertake all herbicide applications in line with legislative requirements, manufacturer instructions, and industry standards. Council also undertakes audits of contractors, both independently and jointly with contractor staff, where aspects of contract performance, including spray application, are reviewed.

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: [Office of the Ombudsman - Complaints](#), or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response to your information request may be published on Hutt City Council's website: [Proactive releases - Hutt City Council](#).

Ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rebekah'.

Rebekah van der Splinter

Senior Advisor, Official Information and Privacy