



2 March 2026

Samuel Lee

s7(2)(a)

Tēnā koe Samuel,

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

We refer to your official information request dated 13 February 2026, seeking information about the Tiaki Wai consultation process. Specifically, you requested:

1. *“What specific channels did the Council use to notify residents?”*
2. *“Why was there no direct mail sent to every ratepayer for a decision of this magnitude?”*
3. *“I request a detailed disclosure of how this survey was conducted:*
 - *Was it a simple online poll hidden on a sub-page of the Council website?*
 - *Did the survey clearly outline the specific costs of the new bureaucracy, including the salaries of the new executives and the fees for overseas auditors?”*
4. *“I look forward to your detailed explanation of the notification process and the methodology of the aforementioned survey.”*
5. *“You stated that only 275 people responded to the survey. This means your decision is based on the input of a mere 0.25% of the population... I am formally disputing the validity of this decision... I request your explanation of the methodology and basis for the ‘275 responses’ figure.”*



Answer:

Your request for information, including your questions about the consultation and decision-making process for delivering water services in the region, has been referred to me for response in my capacity as Head of Strategy and Policy.

Before responding to the information you have requested, we note that you have asked Council to halt the process and undertake a referendum or alternative form of consultation. This part of your correspondence is not a request for official information under the LGOIMA, so it has not been addressed in this response. However, your comments have been noted.

For context, the Government has been working on water reform for over five years. Throughout the process, Council's approach has been to engage openly with our community on the issues by providing high-quality, accurate, localised information about proposed changes.

On 22 February 2022, Council agreed to commence engagement with the residents on the Government's proposed water reforms. You can read the full report here: [Agenda of Policy, Finance and Strategy Committee - Tuesday, 22 February 2022](#) (starting on p.320).

In 2024, the Government introduced legislation that required all Councils to review and change the way they deliver water services. The timing of the Government's approach did not allow for or require Councils to undertake a community referendum ahead of making decisions on how water services will be delivered.

In October 2024, Council agreed to consult on two options for the future delivery model for water services: either establishing a new regional asset-owning water services CCO or retaining the status quo, with changes to meet new legislative requirements, of a non-asset-owning CCO as currently exists with Wellington Water Limited. You can read the full report here: [Agenda of Hutt City Council - Tuesday, 29 October 2024](#) (starting on p.8)

The reform of water services is a significant piece of work that affects everyone. Our goal has been to give residents the information they needed to either make a submission directly to the Government or to inform Council's decision making. This transparency combined with the high-profile water reform has taken in national media and political debate means we can reasonably assume our community is informed about the work to establish new water entities.

The channels Council used to notify residents of the consultation

On 11 March 2025 Council formally considered and agreed the material for consultation on the preferred water services delivery model. The Council report and consultation material are available here: [Addendum Agenda of Hutt City Council - 11 March 2025](#). In line with our Significance and Engagement policy, Council undertook a comprehensive, four-week long consultation process that provided a significant amount of information and documentation to residents across a range of accessible platforms.

The engagement channels included:

- Advertisements in the Hutt News
- Posters and flyers in our hubs and libraries
- A flyer (paper and electronic) to all ratepayers with rates invoices
- A Media release
- Web-based content
- Social media posts
- A survey hosted on our 'Have your Say' platform

Why was no direct mail was sent to all ratepayers?

I can confirm that direct mail was sent to all ratepayers during the consultation period. On 20 March 2025, 18,100 flyers were included in the rates mailout, and a pdf of the flyer included with emailed invoices.

How the survey was conducted

On 27 June 2025, officers reported back to Council on the outcome of the consultation on water services models. You can read the full report here: [Agenda of Hutt City Council - Friday, 27 June 2025](#) (starting on p.9).

The report includes the full consultation document (starting p.19) which outlines how the survey was conducted, and information on the financial impacts and costs of each option (pp.40-44).

The methodology and the basis for the figure of 275 responses

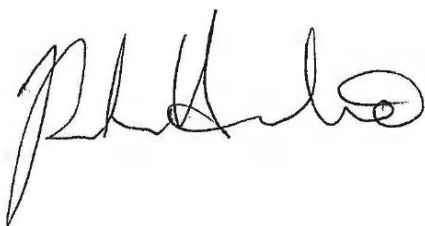
The consultation methodology and report are provided in Attachment 2 of the 27 June report (pp.49-53). With respect to the number of submissions received, you will see in the “Summary of consultation on water services delivery model for all partner councils” (Attachment 3 of the report, starting at p.54) that response rates were broadly similar across the region, with strong support in all councils for establishing a new multi-council owned CCO.

Finally, there is a lot of useful information on Council’s website, including a timeline for decision making: [Local Water Done Well | Hutt City Council](#).

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this response. Information about how to make a complaint is available at: [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



Richard Hardie
Head of Strategy and Policy