

20 September 2022

Melissa Nightingale  
[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe Melissa

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

We refer to your official information request dated 13 September 2022, wanting information about pest control on Hutt City Council land, specifically:

- The council's processes for disposing of the bodies of pests (e.g. goats, deer etc) that are killed on council-owned land
- The number of pests killed on council-owned land in the past five years broken down by year, species, and method of pest control
- The number of pest bodies disposed of by council in the same timeframe broken down by year and species
- Anything else you can think to add is appreciated.

The information you have requested from Hutt City Council is provided below. We also suggest that you contact Greater Wellington Regional Council (ph: (04) 384 5708; or [www.gw.govt.nz](http://www.gw.govt.nz)) about pest control across the Wellington region. Greater Wellington is responsible for the Regional Pest Strategy. It also coordinates, undertakes and contracts out a large amount of pest control on land it manages and on land managed by others.

In responding, we advise that it is not always possible to pinpoint the location where animals die. To the best of our knowledge, all animals reported in this response were killed on land owned or managed by Hutt City Council.

*The council's processes for disposing of the bodies of pests (e.g. goats, deer etc) that are killed on council-owned land*

Most carcasses are left in the bush, but pig, goat and deer carcasses are removed if killed in areas where the public are likely to visit (such as mown reserves or near bush tracks). If deer, goats and pigs are killed near the culler's vehicle or a road, some carcasses will be carried out of the Council's reserve land for disposal or consumption.

*The number of pests killed on council-owned land in the past five years broken down by year, species, and method of pest control*

A summary of the Council's pest control activity from Autumn 2020 was included in the Director's report in the 7 September 2022 Communities Committee agenda. Under this programme, all animals were shot. A copy of the report is provided as an appendix to this letter.

Thirty-five (35) rabbits were shot in parks and reserves in June 2020 to 2021. All carcasses were removed from sites for disposal.

We have not been able to find data about pest control numbers from previous years, and so your request for this information prior to 2020 is refused under section 17(g) of the LGOIMA, as we do not hold this information and we have no reason for believing that the information will be held by, or is more closely connected with the functions of, another local authority, department, Minister of the Crown or organization.

We also advise that the Council supports several volunteer groups to control rats, mustelids (e.g. stoats) and possums. Volunteers working on land managed or owned by Hutt City Council use bait and traps for their operations. We do not hold records of the number of animals culled under this control work.

For example, OSPRI (see [www.ospri.co.nz/](http://www.ospri.co.nz/)) carried out possum control using bait on many properties in Hutt City in mid- 2022, to reduce possum numbers so that their ability to spread tuberculosis to farmed livestock was reduced. Some Council-owned or Council-managed properties were included in this work.

*The number of pest bodies disposed of by council in the same timeframe broken down by year and species*

Hutt City Council does not hold records of the number of carcasses removed from the culling site or buried on site. Accordingly, your request for this information is refused under section 17(g) of the LGOIMA, as we do not hold this information and we have no reason for believing that the information will be held by, or is more closely connected with the functions of, another local authority, department, Minister of the Crown or organization.

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](http://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**

ENCL: Director's report in the 7 September 2022 Communities Committee agenda

## Director's report in the 7 September 2022 Communities Committee agenda

### Parks and Reserves

#### Deer Culling

50. Between March and July 2022 deer control was undertaken at various Hutt City Council reserves and some adjoining properties that provided safe control opportunities. The work was undertaken by Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) staff and external contractors over a total of 334 hours in the field. This work was funded from GWRC and Council operational budgets. Hutt City's contribution was \$20,000.

51. The control work resulted in 66 deer and 10 pigs being removed using a combination of:

- ground hunting with indicator dogs during the day
- drone assisted night shooting; and
- hunting using thermal imaging equipment at night.

	Autumn 2020	Autumn 2021	Autumn 2022
deer	25	56	66
pig	1	1	10
goat		1	0
hours			334

52. The deer control programme is now established and significant numbers of animals are being removed. Council and GWRC officers agree that the Council contribution should increase to enable the control efforts to increase. The intention is to undertake spring and autumn ground hunting with additional night shooting each year. The spring control is additional.

53. The cost of deer culling in 2022/23 is expected to be approximately \$35,000 (\$20,000 + \$15,000). For 2022/23 this will be funded from existing operational budget managed by the Parks and Reserves Business Unit.

54. The best outcome for local biodiversity is to eliminate the wild deer population within the Hutt City Territorial Boundary. There is no intention to support recreational deer hunting on land managed by Council.