

22 September 2022

File Ref: OIAP-7-25754

[REDACTED]

By email: [REDACTED]

Tēnā koe Mr [REDACTED]

### **Request for information 2022-138**

I refer to your request for information dated 26 August 2022, which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on the same day. You have requested the following:

*“Can you please provide me with every wetland assessment undertaken by Owen Spearpoint?”*

*I also ask that it be identified which of those assessments have resulted in enforcement action.”*

### **Greater Wellington’s response follows:**

On 31 August 2022 Greater Wellington sent you a letter requesting that you further clarify your request. Since then, Deborah Kessell-Haak (Manager of Legal and Procurement at Greater Wellington) has emailed you to try and set up a time to discuss the scope of the request, with a view to narrowing the scope, to enable Greater Wellington to release the information. Despite these efforts we have not received any further correspondence from you.

We note that the scale of this request is substantial. It is estimated that Mr Spearpoint has undertaken over 180 wetland assessments since 2016. These assessments are not saved in a way in which they can be easily distinguished from other assessments. These assessments have the potential to contain private information which would need to be located and redacted.

The information contained in many of these assessments includes information which has been provided in confidence. Releasing this information may limit Greater Wellington's ability to gather such information in the future and prevent us from undertaking further work in this area.

We estimate that it will take Greater Wellington personnel approximately 270 to 400 hours over a period of four to six months to search for the information requested, isolate the same, assess the information against the above criteria and release it. This will prevent our expert personnel from undertaking their roles.

Responding to your request would require personnel familiar with wetland delineation methodologies to locate the relevant information and process it for release. Engaging contract personnel is therefore not a feasible option. Greater Wellington staff with this expertise are currently fully dedicated to providing wetland delineation support and advice to our regulation, land management and biodiversity departments or are administering our environmental monitoring programs. Responding to your request would take them away from their usual work in the Environmental Science Department, which would adversely impact the department's work. Greater Wellington does not have the resources to facilitate responding to your request.

As noted above, we have invited you to refine your request. We have also considered whether extending the timeframe to respond to your request or charging you for the supply of the information would be appropriate. In our view these options would not mitigate the significant administrative impact on Greater Wellington's operations that fulfilling your request would entail. Therefore, we have elected to refuse your request under section 17(f) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act (1987)

If you have any concerns with this decision you have the right to request an investigation and review by the Ombudsman under section 27(3) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Our response to your request will be published shortly on Greater Wellington's website with your personal information removed.

Nāku iti noa, nā



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Kaiwhakahaere Matua, Taiao | General Manager, Environment Management