

13 September 2023

File Ref: OIAPR-1274023063-14761

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

### **Request for information 2023-221**

I refer to your request for information dated 20 August 2023, which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on 20 August 2023. You have requested the following:

*“Under the OIA/LGOIMA I would like to know:*

- 1. the average time for a consent to be processed and approved at your council*
- 2. how many consents have been sitting with the council for more than 6 months since it was first submitted, with a decision yet to be made*
- 3. what is the main cause of delays to processing consents*
- 4. how many staff work to process consents at the council*
- 5. how much was spent in the last FY on processing consents (total cost including staffing)*
- 6. what work, if any, is underway to streamline the consenting process at your council*

*I look forward to receiving your responses on Monday 18 September, or before.”*

### **Greater Wellington response follows:**

We have attempted to contact you to discuss and clarify some aspects of your request; however, we did not receive a response. Therefore, we have made some assumptions when assessing the information requested.

The timeframe of the information provided is based off the previous financial year (2022-2023). This information is provided to the Ministry for the Environment as part of the National Monitoring System ([National monitoring system | Ministry for the Environment](#)).

**1. The average time for a consent to be processed and approved at your council**

The average time for consents to be processed is 30 days noting that this time includes days where the applicant agreed to an extension of timeframes under section 37A(4)(b)(ii) of the Resource Management Act 1991. When these days are excluded from the data, the average processing time is 14 days. These average times do not include consents processed under COVID 19 Recovery (Fast Track Consenting) Act 2020, limited notified and publicly notified consents.

**2. How many consents have been sitting with the council for more than 6 months since it was first submitted, with a decision yet to be made**

There are 71 consents that have been pending for more than 6 months that were lodged in 2022-23. This includes consents that have been placed on hold by the applicant or a pending further information to be supplied by the applicant.

**3. What is the main cause of delays to processing consents**

The main cause of processing delays (50%) is due to applications containing incomplete or insufficient information for the scale of the activity. Where this occurs, the applications are placed on hold pending the supply of that further information.

**4. How many staff work to process consents at the council**

As of 30 June 2023, there are 16.6 full time equivalent staff positions within Greater Wellington that focus on processing resource consents.

**5. How much was spent in the last FY on processing consents (total cost including staffing)**

For all consents granted in the last financial year, the total amount charged for these consents was \$1,869,512 (incl. GST). Note: The following context applies:

- This is the cost charged to consent applicants for both staff time (in accordance with our [Resource Management Charging Policy](#)) and external costs e.g. expert reviews
- This cost may include time/cost prior to the last financial year as a number of consents may have been lodged prior to this financial year and therefore incurred costs prior to the last financial year.
- This cost does not include costs for consent applications lodged in the last financial year that have not been processed prior to the end of the financial year.

**6. What work, if any, is underway to streamline the consenting process at your council**

There is no formal work being undertaken by Greater Wellington to streamline the consenting process over and above those avenues that already exist through existing legislation such as deemed permitted activities, direct referral to the Environment Court and fast-track

consenting through the COVID 19 Recovery (Fast-Track Act) 2020. There is often informal work that occurs on an as needs basis that looks to streamline our consent processes e.g. updating templates for decision making, reviewing consent condition templates etc.

If you have any concerns with the decision(s) referred to in this letter, 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



Lian Butcher  
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