

28 April 2023

File Ref: OIAPR-1274023063-1876

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Tēnā koe ██████████

Request for information 2023-070

I refer to your request for information dated 3 April 2023 which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on 3 April 2023. You have requested the following:

1. *“How many years has your council been affiliated with Toitū?”*
2. *How much does it cost your council to maintain certification, including fees from Toitū and costs related to meeting these requirements?*
 - a. *If different, what were the initial up-front costs to achieve compliance with certification standards and achieve certification in the first place? (For the questions relating to the costs, we are asking for any funds that were/are set aside for the Greater Wellington City Council to maintain its Toitū Carbon Neutral accreditation, both upfront and year on year).*
3. *Does the council plan to achieve CarbonZero/Carbon Positive certification, and if so, why, and under what timeframe?*
 - b. *If not, why?*
4. *Has the council considered other certification/auditors, or in-house auditing of their climate emissions as an alternative to Toitū?”*

Greater Wellington’s response follows:

On 3 April 2023 you agreed to clarify your request to “costs related to meeting these requirements”. As the clarification of your request was done within the statutory seven working day timeframe provided for under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, Greater Wellington restarted the 20 working day timeframe to respond.

1. *How many years has your council been affiliated with Toitū?*

Greater Wellington has been affiliated with Toitū since 2019.

2. How much does it cost your council to maintain certification, including fees from Toitū and costs related to meeting these requirements?

It costs \$13,051 for annual verification with an additional \$8,000 for use of Toitū's Emanage software.

2a. If different, what were the initial up-front costs to achieve compliance with certification standards and achieve certification in the first place? (For the questions relating to the costs, we are asking for any funds that were/are set aside for the Greater Wellington City Council to maintain its Toitū Carbon Neutral accreditation, both upfront and year on year).

The annual verification is budgeted through Greater Wellington's Annual Plan. There were no initial startup costs.

3. Does the council plan to achieve CarbonZero/Carbon Positive certification, and if so, why, and under what timeframe?

Greater Wellington does not plan to achieve CarbonZero/Carbon Positive certification.

3b. If not, why?

Greater Wellington declared a climate emergency in 2019 and set a target to be carbon neutral by 2030 and 'climate positive' by 2035. Note that our commitment to and definition of 'climate positive' predates the launch of Toitū's product of the same name, we have not committed to obtaining their certification of 'climate positive' status. Nor have we yet committed to achieving Toitū's 'CarbonZero'-certified status to prove we are a carbon-neutral organisation. We have chosen verification to ISO 14064-1:2018 standard using Toitū's services, this option also saves the council money compared to obtaining their full 'CarbonReduce'-certified status.

4. Has the council considered other certification/auditors, or in-house auditing of their climate emissions as an alternative to Toitū?

We did not consider any other certifications or auditors. This is because no other certifications were relevant and at the time of certification (2019), no other providers were JAS ANZ accredited to do ISO:14064 audits and offer assurance.

We did not consider auditing in-house because an external auditor will provide greater transparency.

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. Fletcher'.

Grant Fletcher
Kaiwhakahaere Matua Rautaki | Acting General Manager Strategy

PROACTIVE RELEASE