

4 December 2025

File Ref: OIAPR-1274023063-44844

By email: [REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Request for information 2025-390

I refer to your request for information received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on 11 November 2025. You have requested the following:

- 1) *Referring to Te Mahere Wai O Te Kahui Taiao¹, that Greater Wellington was responsible for the land around the Parangarehu Lakes and the iwi the waterways/lake beds. How is it then that iwi are being given co-governance over the whole of Gollans Valley, not just the streams?*
- 2) *Can you please also advise the date of issue of the above named implementation plan document for Wellington's waterways.*
- 3) *Please explain how iwi would be 'adversely affected' if the information were to be made available? Please also explain how providing this information would 'publicly undermine your partnership commitments to mana whenua'.*
- 4) *What commitments do mana whenua make to GW in the spirit of co-governance?*
- 5) *How [do] iwi feel about Greater Wellington's use of poison on all the water bodies to try and eradicate noxious weeds, given that they state in the document (TMWOTKT) they don't agree with its use. Also the use of dynamite to clear a blockage of plant material south of the lagoon in Gollans Valley?*

¹ https://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Documents/2021/12/te_mahere_wai_20211028_v32_DIGI_FINAL.pdf

Greater Wellington's response follows:

- 1) Referring to *Te Mahere Wai O Te Kahui Taiao*², that Greater Wellington was responsible for the land around the Parangarehu Lakes and the iwi the waterways/lake beds. How is it then that iwi are being given co-governance over the whole of Gollans Valley, not just the streams?

Since the purchase of this land, Greater Wellington has consistently signalled an intent to co-govern this land with our iwi partners Taranaki Whānui (represented by Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust). A decision by Council will be required to establish a co-governance body to hold responsibility for decision making at Gollans Valley; however, the formal establishment of a co-governance body has not yet occurred.

There are many variations of co-governance across New Zealand, ranging from park boards that operate independently from councils, to co-governance and/or co-management agreements between iwi and government entities. Taranaki Whānui is considering options for co-governance models, as is Greater Wellington.

On our website³, we have stated below:

Working in partnership with mana whenua

The land at Gollan's Valley is highly significant to mana whenua and contains important heritage features. We are committed to working in partnership with Taranaki Whānui to enable this land to fulfil both its cultural and environmental potential.

It's early days, but we are investigating the best way to achieve this and what the options are for co-governance and collaborative delivery. The partnership approach will guide our plans for this special taonga and help create a space that all our communities can treasure and enjoy.

Please refer to **Attachment 1**, which is a report commissioned by Greater Wellington. This report examines various co-governance models in operation across New Zealand. The intent of providing this extra information is to better define a clear definition of the term "co-governance" and to illustrate that there are multiple ways that Greater Wellington's partnership intent with Taranaki Whānui could be realised over time.

- 2) Can you please also advise the date of issue of the above named implementation plan document for Wellington's waterways.

² www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Documents/2021/12/te_mahere_wai_20211028_v32_DIGI_FINAL.pdf

³ <https://www.gw.govt.nz/parks/east-harbour-regional-park/gollans-valley-station/>

Te Mahere Wai o Te Kāhui Taiao was published to Greater Wellington's website on 1 November 2021.⁴

- 3) *Please explain how iwi would be 'adversely affected' if the information were to be made available? Please also explain how providing this information would 'publicly undermine your partnership commitments to mana whenua'.*

In my letter to you of 26 August 2025, I advised that some information relating to your request dated 30 July had been withheld under section 7(2)(c)(i) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act). I acknowledge that the explanation in that letter as to why the information was withheld was unclear, and for that I apologise.

Upon receiving your complaint to the Ombudsman, we reconsidered our decision to withhold this information and provided the information to you in my letter to you dated 11 November 2025.

In that letter, I explained our reasoning around our decision to withhold information, which addresses your current request, as follows:

Greater Wellington decided initially to withhold this information in consideration of two main areas of thinking which are summarised below:

- A. *Greater Wellington ensures that iwi and hapū have authority over taonga such as traditional knowledge and mātauranga as core aspects of their identity. With this in mind, individuals, whānau groups and the wider iwi would be adversely affected as the right of control over korero tuku iho (knowledge handed down to generations) does not belong to Greater Wellington. Providing this information publicly would undermine our partnership commitments to mana whenua.*
- B. *The information withheld was provided to Greater Wellington in confidence. Since the purchase of the Gollan's Valley property, Greater Wellington has indicated our intent to co-govern and co-manage the land in partnership with Taranaki Whānui. The establishment of co-governance arrangements will require close partnership and high trust between Greater Wellington and Taranaki Whānui while we explore appropriate co-governance models that are fit for Greater Wellington, Taranaki Whānui and the community going forward. Greater Wellington values the ability to speak with iwi partners candidly. Wider public engagement on the future of Gollan's Valley will begin in due course. Until that time, Greater Wellington does not want to prejudice the supply of information from Taranaki Whānui, relating to their spiritual*

⁴ www.gw.govt.nz/environment/freshwater/protecting-the-waters-of-your-area/whaitua-te-whanganui-a-tara/te-mahere-wai-recommendations/

connections to the land, by implying that every high-trust conversation could be scrutinised by public examination.

4) *What commitments do mana whenua make to GW in the spirit of co-governance?*

Please refer to my 26 August 2025 letter which describes many “mana whenua commitments” in the spirit of co-governance. For easy reference, relevant content of our 26 August letter follows:

As a public organisation Greater Wellington recognises the deep connections that mana whenua Taranaki Whānui has with the area and the related Crown historical breaches of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its principles in respect of Taranaki Whānui, both of which were upheld by the Waitangi Tribunal and later acknowledged by the Crown in the Taranaki Whānui ki te Ūpoko o Te Ika Settlement. This approach is complemented with our consultation and engagement processes with community interest groups and the wider community to support activities for biodiversity uplift and healthy ecosystems in the park’s environment.

Recommended sources to support historical research include: the Waitangi Tribunal, Te Whanganui a Tara me ōna Takiwā 2003, and relevant settlement documents held by Te Tari Whakatau.⁵

As a Council we note our commitments and obligations include providing for Māori participation in decision making and take into account the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral land, water, wāhi tapu, valued flora and fauna and other taonga. Working in partnership with mana whenua is an expression of our values, embedded in our organisational practices and strategic plans.

Local government legislation also plays a significant role in defining Greater Wellington’s partnership responsibilities and continues to shape our developing journey to partnering excellence, these include:

- *Resource Management Act 1991*
- *Local Government Act 2002*
- *Conservation Act 1987*
- *Reserves Act 1977*
- *Biosecurity Act 1993*
- *Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o te Ika Deed of Settlement*

⁵ whakatau.govt.nz/te-tira-kurapounamu-treaty-settlements/find-a-treaty-settlement/taranaki-whanui-ki-te-upoko-o-te-ika#Taranaki_Whanui_DOS_DOC

Co-management arrangements outlined in the Port Nicholson Block (Taranaki Whānui ki te Upoko i te Ika) Deed of Settlement From documents schedule.⁶

The references above to local government legislation describe Greater Wellington's commitments to co-governance and/or co-management. The commitments of mana whenua working with Greater Wellington in co-governance will enable those local government obligations to be met. As noted in my response to question 1 above, the specific commitments of mana whenua working with Greater Wellington in the context of Gollans Valley has not yet been decided by iwi or by Greater Wellington.

5) *How [do] iwi feel about Greater Wellington's use of poison on all the water bodies to try and eradicate noxious weeds, given that they state in the document (TMWOTKT) they don't agree with its use.*

Greater Wellington does not hold information that captures how iwi feel about the use of "poison" (chemical controls on pest plants) on "all of the water bodies". Therefore we are refusing this part of your request under section 17(g) of the Act on the basis that the information requested is not held by the local authority and the person dealing with the request has no grounds for believing that the information is either held by another local authority or a department or Minister of the Crown or organisation; or connected more closely with the functions of another local authority, or a department or Minister of the Crown or organisation.

As background, Greater Wellington's use of chemicals to control pest plants varies greatly depending on the species of plant under management, such as whether the plant is land-based or aquatic, how vast the incursion or habitat dominance has advanced, etc. Our work with iwi relating to the use of chemical control agents to manage pests is case-by-case.

On 12 November 2025, Rōpū Taiki – which is a co-management forum of Taranaki Whānui and Greater Wellington staff - considered the use of Glyphosate (common name, "Round Up") to control an incursion of a pest plant at Parangarau Lakes. The meeting notes relevant to this part of the meeting follow:

*Two Attachments provided before meeting [note, the two attachments referred to in these meeting notes are provided as **Attachments 2 and 3** to this letter]*

- *The use of herbicide (glyphosate) to control Yellow Flag Iris*
- *Risk Assessment of Glyphosate Herbicide*

Rōpū considered the two papers and GW staff's explanation of the ecological risks of the pest and treatment options.

⁶ <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2009/0026/latest/whole.html#DLM1525889>

DECISION:

A. *Rōpū agreed to use Glyphosate this summer.*

6) *Also [how do iwi feel about] the use of dynamite to clear a blockage of plant material south of the lagoon in Gollans Valley?*

We have refused this part of your request under section 17(g) of the Act on the basis that the information requested is not held by the local authority and the person dealing with the request has no grounds for believing that the information is either held by another local authority or a department or Minister of the Crown or organisation; or connected more closely with the functions of another local authority, or a department or Minister of the Crown or organisation.

We understand that this part of your request refers to a Greater Wellington activity in Gollan's Stream involving the breakdown of a large, floating island of vegetation material by means of a controlled blast of explosives in August 2013. This activity was related to the demolition of a nearby boardwalk at that time in order to avoid restricting stream flow and causing flooding on upstream private land. We are unable to locate any records relating to how iwi felt about that activity; however, in the interest of full transparency please refer to **Attachment 4**.

Attachment 4 contains an email dated 7 August 2013 that was sent to staff within our iwi partner organisations. We have withheld the details of these individuals under section 7(2)(a) of the Act to protect the privacy of natural persons. Our understanding is that a site visit was held on 3 August 2013, referred to in the 7 August 2013 email, in which iwi representatives were present. Following the information provided in the 7 August 2013 email, I understand that iwi were comfortable with the controlled blast activity proceeding. My understanding is based on a recent conversation with a Greater Wellington staff member who was involved in the activity in 2013 and their recollections were that the work had no objection from mana whenua.

As stated above, we do not hold information relating to how iwi feel about the use of dynamite in waterways. If Greater Wellington considered any such activity in the future, we would plan that in partnership with iwi in consideration of the circumstances.

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 appropriate. Our response to your request will be published shortly on Greater Wellington's website with your personal information removed.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Monica Fraser

Te Pou Whakarae, Te Hunga Whiriwhiri | Group Manager Māori

PROACTIVE RELEASE