

31 May 2024

LGOIMA IRO-666

[Redacted]

Tēnā koe [Redacted]

### Response to your request

Thank you for your request transferred from the Wellington City Council on 15 April 2024 asking about the ongoing leakages in the network that have been left unattended with fresh water continuously leaking.

I apologise for the time it has taken to respond to your request.

Your request is responded to in accordance with the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act (LGOIMA) 1987. Your questions have been individually answered on the following page with website references provided for further background information.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to email us at [official.information@wellingtonwater.co.nz](mailto:official.information@wellingtonwater.co.nz)

Nāku noa, nā

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Head of Customer Experience  
Customer Operations Group

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**Our water, our future.**

1. *What specific prioritisation measures have the council and its contractors used to make a decision to leave several leaks as they have been for more than months after being reported and to focus their time and energy on new projects – what is the strategy for identifying and fixing these leaks – I want to know the process, timeline and resources needed to take this problem effectively*

Please refer to the following weblink that provides a comprehensive description of how Wellington Water addresses water leaks:

<https://www.wellingtonwater.co.nz/resources/topic/water-conservation/leaks/>

2. *Could you also share the council's knowledge on the amount of freshwater lost due to these leakages? Specifically, I would like to know the total volume of water leaked.*

Without universal water meters producing an accurate figure is not straightforward. In 2021 Wellington Water Limited (WWL) installed 16 'small area meters' to monitor residential water use and to provide councils with more accurate data, however this does come with a large range of uncertainty, due to the number of meters.

Wellington Water provides 'leak statistics' on its webpage at:

<https://www.wellingtonwater.co.nz/resources/topic/water-conservation/leaks/leak-stats/>

You will be aware that it has been widely reported in the media that the Wellington metropolitan region is losing the equivalent of 30.6 Olympic pools of water a day through its leaks. A swimming pool of this size is 2.5 million litres, so this is around 76.5 million litres per day.

For context, the region's households collectively use up to 205 million litres per day in summer. WWL can supply up to approximately 220 million litres of water per day. However, in summer, when river levels drop, the supply drops to around 170 million litres of water per day. This is why there have been significant restrictions on water use over the summer period.

3. *Has the council done any internal assessment on how much this ongoing water pipe burst and leakage has impacted the city's and council's emissions and sustainability compliance*

WWL cannot comment on whether water leakage is impacting Wellington City Council's emissions and sustainability compliance.

WWL has not quantified the emissions impact of water leaks. In reference to the LGOIMA, this means that this part of your request is refused under section 17(e) as the information requested does not exist.

However, I can refer you to the following page regarding our 2023 regional review to reduce our carbon emissions.

WWL's work is designed to ensure the three waters networks are increasingly resilient to natural events and climate change impacts. You may be interested in reading WaterNZ.orgs article titled *Setting Wellington Water on a Pathway to Net Zero Emissions* at: [https://www.waternz.org.nz/Article?Action=View&Article\\_id=2647](https://www.waternz.org.nz/Article?Action=View&Article_id=2647)

## Reducing our carbon emissions.

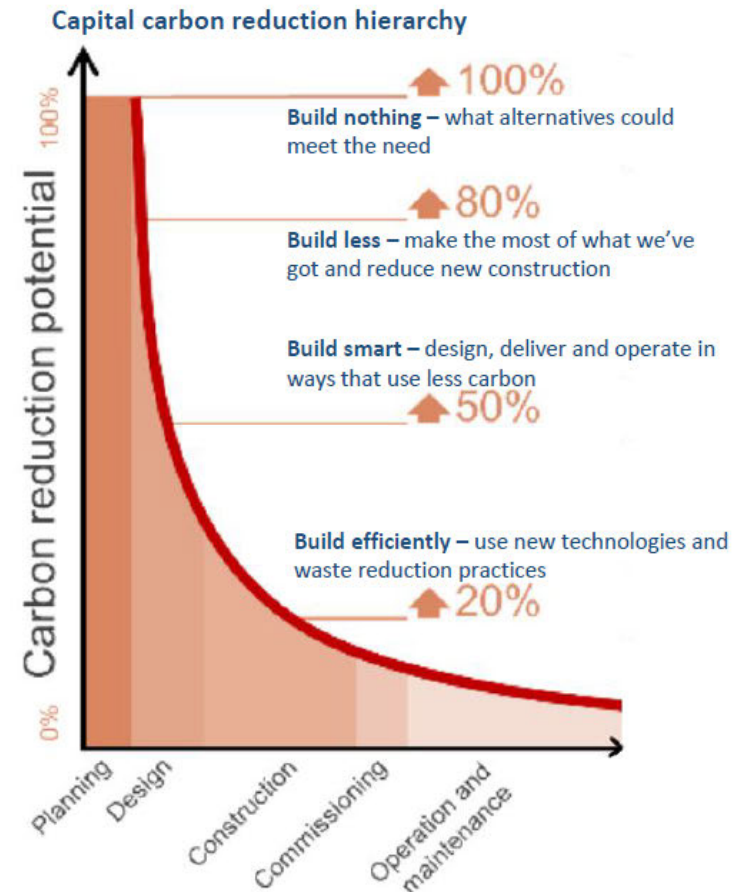
The Zero Carbon Act sets the target for New Zealand of achieving net zero carbon dioxide emissions, and a significant reduction in methane emissions by 2050. Interim five-yearly carbon emission budgets will be used to transition the economy to this net zero position. Reducing emissions generated in the operation of water services in line with this national direction is one of the region's five strategic priority areas for investment; however it has received very little funding due to the pressing challenges faced in the other priority areas.

The Carbon Programme has been structured into capital and operational carbon (including Wellington Water operations). Benchmarking work shows that operational emissions doubled in the past five years and are forecast to increase by another 10 per cent by 2050. Two of the biggest sources of emissions in this area come from the byproducts (sludge) of water treatment, and power requirements to pump water.

Capital carbon is that generated by the construction of assets and offers our best opportunity to achieve carbon reduction. Experience overseas shows the innovative thinking required to reduce carbon can create cost savings as well, if we incorporate it into the entire value chain

We've developed a roadmap to share with council climate and help inform the discussion on investment priorities in the workshops intended for May-June. There are two scenarios – broadly speaking, do all the well understood activity, which would require additional investment but would not be likely to achieve the target reductions; or invest in it a level that would create a step change.

We are developing tools to support improved reporting and visibility of carbon produced in our capital delivery programme.



*Research supports this representation of the most effective ways of reducing carbon emissions in a capital delivery programme. The greatest reductions are achieved by thinking smart – challenging the root causes of the need or finding alternatives; and making the most of what we already have. These principles underpin other strategic investment priorities: Looking After Existing Assets and reducing demand for water.*