


18 November 2025

LGOIMA 25-200



Tēnā koe 

Request for information

Thank you for your request of 13 October 2025, made under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA – the Act) for the following:

- *Number of people employed in the Wellington Water Communications Team*
- *The salary cost for the Comms team for the 2024/25 financial year (last FY)*
- *The cost of communications contractors / suppliers*
- *The names of communication contractors / suppliers*

Your request is responded to in accordance with the Act. Please refer to the appendix on the following page that responds to your individual questions. We apologise for the length of time it has taken to respond to this.

Please note that it is our policy to publicly release our responses to official information requests where possible. Our response to your request may be published at <https://www.wellingtonwater.co.nz/about-us/official-requests/official-information-act-responses/> with any personal information removed.

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 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

Nāku noa, nā

pp. 

Pat Dougherty
Chief Executive

Appendix

Communications and engagement staff and contractor costs

The table below outlines the number of communications and engagement roles (permanent and fixed term), salary expenditure, and cost on communication contractors and suppliers at Wellington Water.

Please note, the below figures will differ from information previously provided. This is due to the figures referencing a different time period and this year we have extended the scope of our response and interpreted your request to include the cost of the use of PR sub-contractors on our capital projects – information that we have not previously held but have sourced from external consultants.

Table A:

The below table outlines the number of roles in the Communications and Engagement team at Wellington Water, not number of staff employed throughout the financial year. This is because within a year there may be more than one staff member in the same role (e.g. someone leaves and another person is recruited within the same year to fill the same role). The below info excludes summer interns.

| Financial years 1 July – 30 June | # of roles in the comms team | Total salary earnings | External PR agencies for advice | External PR contractors on projects |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Current FY: 1 July – 30 Sep 2025 | 14 | \$450,712 | \$0 | \$0 |
| 2024/2025 | 14 | \$1,348,446 | \$9,088 | \$242,848 |

As a support function to the organisation, the Communications and Engagement Team is responsible for all internal and external communications and engagement.

This includes a range of core activities such as communicating with our staff; working with media; notifications of water outages; wastewater discharges; compliance at treatment plants; project updates; door knocking; letter drops; and liaising with the community and local businesses when our work impacts them or causes disruption.

The team's work is driven by the organisation's programmes and delivery. In the past few years, we have increased resources to meet the demands of the business. For example, our capital development programme has grown from \$67m in the 2018/19 financial year to \$340m for the current 2025/26 financial year.

From time-to-time we also engage some external agencies to provide us with strategic advice. Over the past 3-4 years we have used the following suppliers:

- PQC
- Latitude Strategy and Communications

Communications and Engagement for project work – improvements made

Another core area of communications and engagement work is supporting our water infrastructure projects which build, upgrade and replace water assets in the region.

As a result of previous management decisions, traditionally all communications and engagement on projects were externally managed by our previous consultant and contractor panel set up, which were recently disestablished in early 2025 as part of our efforts to achieve better commercial tension and value for money.

Under the previous panel model, the majority of communications and engagement work was outsourced almost exclusively to one sub-contractor, Latitude Strategy and Communications. Additionally, during times of peak workload, communications and engagement work would also be funnelled to the panel's in-house communications and engagement teams.

When it comes to the previous panel model, Wellington Water acknowledges that we were not able to demonstrate value for money for councils and ratepayers for previous years. To rectify this, in Oct 2024, we brought all communications and engagement work on projects in-house with a team of 4 replacing Latitude's and other outsourced effort. This new team is now managing 84 current projects, at various life stages.

Other added value benefits of having this work delivered in-house include:

- Full transparency and oversight of costs – both of staff costs and also ad-hoc communications and engagement related costs such as printing or design costs, travel costs, catering for events, etc.
- Full decision making of who delivers communications and engagement work and how this is delivered now sits internally with Wellington Water.
- Full oversight of communications and engagement activities on all projects which has allowed early escalation of risks and identification of opportunities.
- A direct and stronger relationship between Wellington Water and the community – when a member of public is dealing with someone in our Stakeholder Engagement Team, they are talking directly to someone who works for Wellington Water and not via a contractor.
- Standardised approach and processes.
- Greater alignment in engagement practices across the operational and capital projects.
- At times of peak workload, overflow work is not outsourced and seamlessly supported by the wider communications and engagement team, with little to no added cost.