

8 October 2025

LGOIMA 25-190

Tēnā koe

Art work on Whakawhirinaki – Silverstream Water Bridge and Shared Path

I refer to your Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) request asking for details regarding the artwork at the ends of the Silverstream pipe bridge:

- *Whose idea was it to add the strange iron sculptures at each end of the bridge?*
- *Who designed them?*
- *What are they meant to represent?*
- *How much did they cost to make and install?*

A comprehensive description of the Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) consenting requirements, cultural integration and background requirements on approvals related to Whakawhirinaki artwork are included below for your wider understanding.

GWRC consent conditions and cultural inputs on the urban design and landscaping plans for Whakawhirinaki

The GWRC consent conditions for the Urban Design and Landscaping Plans (UDLP) include specific conditions for input and review by mana whenua and explicitly reference the integration of ‘cultural features’ into the final plans. Part of meeting these requirements meant Wellington Water worked with Taranaki Whanui who designed the sculptures for the site. Additionally, Mana Whenua were also heavily involved in the naming of the bridge. These elements were an important part of Wellington Water working to integrate cultural values and input into the project and to meet GWRCs resource consent conditions.

GWRC approvals

Wellington Water has been transparent about the work on the sculptures throughout the project. The sculpture was shown in rendered designs, presentations, and collateral submitted as part of the UDLP approval process under the regional consent. The approval was then provided for by GWRC compliance team.

Additionally, it featured in various engagements with different parts of GWRC between 2022 and the present, during which the sculptures were part of the broader project context. However, we do acknowledge that specific council approval for the cost of the sculptures was not sought. At the time of the development of the sculpture (2022/2023) it was not part of our process to gain council approval for spend on smaller scope elements of projects that fall within the broader approved project parameters (i.e. consents, technical). Since then, we have changed our processes to strengthen transparency and council approval is now sought for these types of activities.

Sculpture design, cost and representation

The total cost – design, supply and installation is \$245,0000. The design was completed by specialist cultural advisor and designer stipulated by Taranaki Whanui and a specialist local builder created the sculptures.

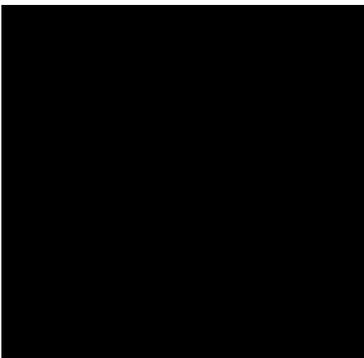
Attached is an appendix for the text from the interpretive signate that will be soon installed onsite to explain the cultural design.

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

You have the right to seek an investigation and review of this decision by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

If you would like to discuss this response further, please contact us at official.information@wellingtonwater.co.nz.

Nāku noa, nā



**Group Manager
Capital Delivery**

Whakawhirinaki

The Silverstream Water Bridge and Shared Path



Nau mai, haere mai, welcome

Whakawhirinaki (the Silverstream Water Bridge) is an earthquake-resilient bridge crossing replacing a vulnerable section of the Te Mārua to Karori water supply pipeline. In addition to its primary function, it now features a dedicated pedestrian and cycle path, enhancing connectivity between key destinations on either side of the river.



Cultural design and narrative expression

Well before the rising of Tama-nui-te-rā (the sun), Te Kāhui Maunga (the Mountain Clan) through their proverbial saying “ko ngā taringa i kite” (it is my ears that see) observed the rich deafening sounds of the orchestra deep within the dense forest of Tāne Mahuta. The rippling of the water tributaries, the song of birds, the movement of wildlife and insects who had been securely contained since the lacerations from the hands of Te Kāhui Māui upon the great catch of Māui Pōtiki are now freed to care for the land.

Pathway

The pattern that adorns the path over the bridge acknowledges Te Wai Manga, the freshwater tributaries that run into the main catchment of Te Awa Kairangi from the surrounding hills.



Bird Sculpture

The sculptural elements in the form of birds, act as a welcome marker at either end of the bridge, and depict the rich resources that were observed and utilised within this area by mana whenua.



Purpose of Whakawhirinaki

The bridge connects Te Mārua reservoir to our taps in Porirua and Wellington. It can carry 60 million litres a day.

Under normal operating conditions, Te Mārua Water Treatment Plant provides all of the drinking water used by Upper Hutt, Stokes Valley, Manor Park, Porirua and about 40% of Wellington City’s supply. Water sourced from Te Awa Kairangi / Hutt River is collected and treated at Te Mārua before travelling along the pipeline and across this bridge.



No vehicles off-road



No rubbish
Take your litter home

