DEPARTMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET
TE TARI O TE PIRIMIA ME TE KOMITI MATUA

31 August 2026

Ref: OIA-2026/27-0149 & OIA-2026/27-0170

[redacted]

Tēnā koe [redacted],

Official Information Act request relating to government funding

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request, which was received by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) on 18 August 2026. You requested:

1. *"Why did the Government pay $149.793 million in funding to Rotorua Iwi for the Wai Ariki Spa, Jobs for Nature, Wharenui Road and Manawa Gardens Iwi Housing?*

2. *Why is the North Island Councils and South Island Councils' surplus for 2025 of $1.082311 billion, identical to the total of $1.08311 billion of Te Komiti Nui o Ngati Whakaue $1.00126 billion Assets as at 2025, the Government funding of $149.793 million to Rotorua Iwi, $2 million Te Arawa Lakes Trust Funding/Maori Referendum Maori Wards, less the attached itemised adjustments of $70.742 million?*

3. *Why do the Rotorua Lakeside Ratepayers have to contribute $53.48 million towards sewerage reticulation, resulting in $22,486 per household for Lake Rotoiti/Rotoma and $36,600 per household at Lake Tarawera?*

4. *Why was the $19.711 million Freshwater Improvement Fund not allocated to the Lake Tarawera Sewerage Scheme?*

5. *Why do the South Island Councils' Deficits of $30.985 million, with $2.461 million adjustments from the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group, add up to $33.446 million which is the same as the Cost for Lake Rotoiti/Rotoma Sewerage Scheme in the Annual Reports?*

6. *Why do Rotorua Lakes Council state the Lake Rotoiti/Rotoma Sewerage Scheme cost $67.2 million?*

7. *Why are the North Island Councils' Deficits of $59.445 million, identical to the $55.55 million Bay of Plenty Lakes Enhancement Rate, less the $2.07 million Agreed 2020 Lake Rotoiti/Rotoma sewerage contribution, plus Inflated $5.505 million Lake Rotorua Sewerage Scheme in the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group, 0.45 million Te Arawa Lakes Trust Leadership Intervention in the 2025 Funding Deed and the 0.01 million reduction for the Lake Tarawera Subsidy and Lakes Enhancement Rate?*

8. *Why does the North Island Councils' Surplus of $705.163 million with $8.837 million adjustments from Rotorua Lakes Council add up to $714 million, which identical to the Government's 2001 Guarantees & Indemnities, Contingent Liabilities and Demonetised currency? Note Rotorua Lakes Council 2025 Surplus of $8.327 million was not included in the attached North Island Councils' Surplus Table. The 0.51 million difference could be calculated as;*

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- *0.45 - Te Arawa Lakes Trust Leadership Intervention - 2025 Funding Deed*
- *0.05 - Reduction of Better Off Fund - Lake Tarawera Sewerage Scheme 2.05m-2m*
- *0.005 - Reduction of Subsidy - Lake Tarawera Sewerage Scheme 1.485m-1.48m*
- *0.005 - Reduction of Lakes Enhancement Rate - Lake Tarawera Sewerage Scheme 1.585m-1.58m*
- *0.51 million*

9. *Why does the $714 million North Island Councils' Surplus when added with the $16.35 million inflated costs of Lake Rotoiti/Rotoma Sewerage Scheme, Extra $3 million funding for Lake Tarawera Sewerage Scheme, less the $3.3 million Lake Rotokakahi Protest Costs, less the $0.05 million reduction for Ministry for Environment's contribution to the Funding Deed for the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Programme and the reduced Rotorua Lakes Council repayment to Bay of Plenty Regional Council's Loan for the Lake Rotoiti/Rotoma Sewerage Scheme total $730 million, identical to the Whai Kainga Whai Oranga Maori Housing Programme?*

10. *Have the Treaty of Waitangi Claims now been settled?*
    - *2.730 - Treaty of Waitangi Settlements as at 1/4/25*
    - *1.708 - Rotorua Lakes Council Lakes Enhancement Rate 2007-2024*
    - *0.007 - Ministry for Environment Extra Opening Balance - Funding Deed 55.007*
    - *0.007 - Bay of Plenty Regional Council Extra Opening Balance - Funding Deed 22.507*
    - *0.007 - Te Arawa Lakes Trust Conservation Skills Employment Pilot*
    - *-332.3 - Less Kainga Ora Rotorua Housing + BOP Accessible Housing*
    - *2399.429 billion*
    - *2399.429 - Ngati Whakaue, Te Arawa Assets and Government Funding - as attached.*

11. *Will the Rotorua Ratepayers be repaid the Sewerage Funding and Lakes Strategy totalling $639.241 million as per my Parliament Petition presented to Rt Hon Winston Peters, who presented it to the House of Representatives on Tuesday 28th July 2026?"*

On 26 August 2026, DPMC received a further request from you that relates to the same matter. You requested:

1. *"Why did the Te Arawa Lakes Trust Assets in 2022 when combined with the Bay of Plenty Regional Council's contribution towards sewerage in the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group, identical to the $144.2 million Rotorua Lakes Protection & Restoration Plan in 2008?*

2. *Why did the Rotorua Lakes Council did not allocate its cash contribution and debt from rates in the 2025 Freshwater Improvement Fund, to the Lake Tarawera Sewerage Scheme?*

3. *Why is the unallocated Freshwater Improvement Fund, less the 2025 non-native tree removal from the Lake Tarawera Reserve and the Lake Rotorua Lake Weed Removal in 2022 identical to the $10.4 million 2006 Te Arawa Lakes Trust Settlement?*

4. *The Te Arawa Lakes Trust reduced its assets between 2022 to 2025 by $38.89 million from 141.3 million to 102.41 million.*

5. *Why is this the same as the 2025 increase in Ngati Whakaue Tribal Lands Trust and Ngati Whakaue Assets Trust Assets, less Ngati Whakaue contributed 0.15 million to the Rotorua Museum and Ministry for Environment added 0.007 million to its opening balance of the Funding Deed for the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Programme, the 0.001 discrepancy in Ngati Whakaue Assets Trust Surplus was stated as 639.215, when in actual fact it added to 639.214 identical to $38.89 million?*

6. *Why did the Labour Government pay $38.9 million COVID-19 Recovery payment to Rotorua Tourism Operators in 2020?*

7. *Did this leave a shortfall of funding for the modified Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Programme?*

8. *Is this why the Lakeside Ratepayers have to contribute $22,486 per household at Lake Rotoiti/Rotoma and $36,600 per household at Lake Tarawera?*

9. *Has the Government been paying the Maori Economy $10.24 billion per annum?*

In February 2026 the Anti-Corruption Taskforce estimated $10.24 billion is lost to corruption and fraud through public services.
12.3 years of National and Labour @ $10.24 billion = 125.952
45.5 - Lake Rotorua Incentives Scheme Policy
3.3 - Lake Rotokakahi Protest Costs/Low Nitrogen Land Use Fund
-0.8 - Less Possible future funding - Rotorua Museum
48 million

125.952
0.048
126 billion - Maori Economy

The National Government stated that the government's books will return to surplus in 2028.

The Government's Debt is $272.085 billion as at 2025.

126 - Maori Economy as at 2023
126 - Government's share
10.24 - Corruption & Fraud 2026
10.24 - Corruption & Fraud 2027
-0.395
272.085 billion

298.604 - Rotorua Lakes Council Target Sewerage Rates 2004-2025
113.337 - Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group Expenses 2024
-8.65 - Less Enhanced Cultural Requirement Lake Rotoiti/Rotoma Sewerage
-7.7 - Less Construction Cost Escalation - Lake Rotoiti/Rotoma Sewerage
-0.45 - Less Te Arawa Lakes Leadership Intervention - 2025 Funding Deed
-0.133 - Less Lake Rotorua Lake Weed Removal 2025 (RLC 0.067 BOPRC 0.066)
-0.008 - Less increase WWTP Asset Disposal - Contact Bed 6.95-6.958m
395 million

10. Why do the Te Komiti Nui o Ngati Whakaue Assets as at 2024 total 1001.26 billion, also add up to the following?

332.3 - Kainga Ora Rotorua Housing + BOP Accessible Housing
247.9 - Whai Kainga Whai Oranga Maori Housing Programme
149.793 - Government Funding - Wai Ariki Spa, Jobs for Nature, Wharenui Road & Manawa Gardens Iwi Housing
13.5 - QE Health Building in Liquidation as Landowner
230.1 - Crown Regional Holdings - Maori Loans at risk for default
10.4 - Te Arawa Lakes Settlement 2006
8.68 - Sale proceeds - Kereru Farm Lake Rotorua BOPRC Purchase 30/6/26
8.65 - Enhanced Cultural Requirement -Lake Rotoiti/Rotoma Sewerage
0.038 - Return Costs for Gifted Ngongataha Section to Iwi
0.025 - Reduced Rotorua Lakes Council loan repayment to BOPRC - Lake Rotoiti/Rotoma (10-9.975m)
-0.1 - Less Extra Funding - Lake Tarawera Sewerage RLC 28/5/25
-0.026 - Non-native Tree Removal - Lake Tarawera Reserve
1001.26 billion"

Information not held

Regarding your first request, as previously advised in response to your prior requests under the Act, questions 1 to 9 and 11 of your request of 18 August 2026 primarily concern Rotorua Lakes Council funding, rates, sewerage schemes, local infrastructure, and related local authority matters. I understand that you have already been in contact with Rotorua Lakes Council directly. For that reason, I have decided that neither a referral nor a transfer is required in this instance. DPMC does not administer these matters and does not hold information that would answer these parts of your request.

Accordingly, I am refusing these parts of your request under section 18(g) of the Act, on the basis that the information requested is not held by DPMC and I do not have grounds to believe it is held by, or more closely connected with the functions of, another department, Minister of the Crown, organisation, or local authority subject to the Act.

Regarding your second request, the matters you have raised in questions 1 to 10 appear to seek explanations or opinions rather than specified official information. The Act does not require a Minister of the Crown, including the Prime Minister, or an agency to form an opinion, create information, or generate explanations in order to answer a request. These questions are therefore also refused under section 18(g) of the Act as they are not requests for official information, as defined in section 2 of the Act.

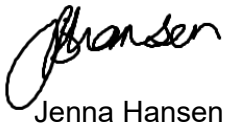
Information publicly available

In relation to Question 10 of your request of 18 August 2026, information about Treaty settlements, including settlement status and publicly available settlement material, is available through Te Tari Whakatau – Office for Māori Crown Relations' Treaty settlement search tool: Te Tari Whakatau - Find a Treaty settlement. I am therefore refusing this part of your request under section 18(d) of the Act, as the information requested is publicly available.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review this decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

This response will be published on the DPMC website during our regular publication cycle. Typically, information is released monthly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information, including your name and contact details, will be removed before publication.

Nāku noa, nā



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