

6 March 2025

Dear [REDACTED]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL INFORMATION AND MEETINGS ACT Request: 2025-06

Thank you for your email of 26 February 2025 to the Carterton District Council requesting the following information:

“...a copy of the letter signed by the three councils to Audit NZ?”

Your request has been considered under the Local Government Official Information and Meeting Act 1987 (the Act). I note that the letter you are requesting was to John Ryan, the Audit-General, not Audit NZ.

I am withholding the letter under section 7(2)(f)(i) of the Act, for the reason that the letter contains free and frank opinions between Council officers to the Auditor-General about the performance of Audit NZ. Disclosing this information would inhibit the future exchange of free and frank opinions and the ability to express such opinions is necessary for the effective conduct of public affairs as the Auditor-General is responsible for Audit NZ carrying out its audits.

We recognise there is public interest in making this information available, but we do not consider that the public interest outweighs the need to be able to provide free and frank opinions in this manner.

We have also considered whether we could mitigate the harm in releasing the information in the letter, such as through a partial release or a summary of the information, but this is not possible due to the nature of the content and opinions expressed in the letter.

Please note, the Council proactively publishes LGOIMA responses on our website. As such, we may publish this response on our website after five working days. Your name and contact details will be removed.

Thank you again for your email. If you have further questions please feel free to contact our media team in the first instance at comms@cdc.govt.nz. If you are unsatisfied with my response, you have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review it. You can do this by writing to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Geoff Hamilton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line underlining the name.

Geoff Hamilton
Chief Executive
Carterton District Council

RELEASED UNDER LGOIMA