

04 August 2022

Via FYI website

Kia ora

Release of pre-election report

Thank you for your request made under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act), received on 12 July 2022. You requested the following information:

1. Was the leak of the report to the Stuff website authorised by a council officer; if so, what is the job title of that officer?
2. Will a leak inquiry be launched; if so, will it be conducted internally, or will an external authority be tasked with the inquiry?
3. What sanctions could apply to an officer found to have leaked this report?
4. When was the report first published on the WCC website?
5. When was the report first made available to Councillors?
6. When was the report first made available to the Mayor?
7. When was the report first made available to Stuff?
8. A copy of any communications plan or similar document setting out the plan for releasing the statutory Pre-Election Report
9. Any emails, SMS texts, WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram or similar messages between the CEO and Mr Richard McLean or any other Council officer purporting to authorise the leak to Stuff
10. Any emails, SMS texts, WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram or similar messages between the CEO and journalists at Stuff relating to the release of the report
11. Any emails, SMS texts, WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram or similar messages between the Mr Richard McLean and journalists at Stuff relating to the release of the report

It is common practice within the public service and local government for key reports to be released under embargo to one or more media outlets. The pre-election report is an independent report by the Chief Executive to the city, once every triennium. Its content must be provided independently of the elected council and not be constrained by a political view. This report, as with previous WCC pre-election reports, provides a range of factual data and outlines the key issues that a future council is likely to face. It also gives extensive coverage to the significant planning and decision-making this council has undertaken this triennium to address the challenges.

Wellington City Council has partially granted your request for information. The report was not leaked. Therefore, questions one, two, three, and nine are refused under section 17(g) as the information does not exist. The remainder of your questions are answered below.

4. When was the report first published on the WCC website?
5. When was the report first made available to Councillors?
6. When was the report first made available to the mayor?
7. When was the report first made available to Stuff?

4.	Report published on Council website	8:30am Tuesday 12 July
5.	Report made available to Councillors	7:56am Tuesday 12 July
6.	Report made available to Mayor	Printed version of the report was provided to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on Monday 11 July
7.	Report made available to Stuff	5:23pm Thursday 07 July

A copy of any communications plan or similar document setting out the plan for releasing the statutory Pre-Election Report

A copy of the communications plan is attached (item 1).

Any emails, SMS texts, WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram or similar messages between the CEO and journalists at Stuff relating to the release of the report

The Chief Executive, Barbara McKerrow, received a text message on 10 July from a Stuff reporter to which she did not respond (item 2).

Any emails, SMS texts, WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram or similar messages between Mr Richard McLean and journalists at Stuff relating to the release of the report

The report was sent to Stuff News Director Gina Crampton on 07 July via email (item 3).

Below are the documents that fall in scope of your request and my decision to release the document. Any redactions made are for privacy reasons.

Item	Document name/description	Decision
1.	Communications plan	Release in full
2.	Screenshot of message from Stuff reporter to Chief Executive	Release in full
3.	Emails from WCC media team to Stuff News Director	Release in full

Right of review

If you are not satisfied with the Council's response, you may request the Office of the Ombudsman to investigate the Council's decision. Further information is available on the Ombudsman website, www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Please note, we will release our response to your request on our website.

Thank you again for your request, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Kind regards

Claudia Holgate
Senior Advisor, Official Information

Communications Plan

Pre-Election Report

Introduction

The Pre-Election Report is a 'state of the Council' snapshot produced every three years before the local body elections.

It is required under the Local Government Act 2002, with the purpose of providing information to promote public discussion about the issues facing the local authority.

The report is prepared by the chief executive, and represents an opportunity to speak directly to Wellingtonians on the business and operations of the Council.

Potential local body election candidates and residents are encouraged to read the report to gain an understanding of the big challenges and opportunities which lie ahead for the Council and the city.

The Pre-Election Report must be published, at the latest, two weeks before nomination day, which in 2022 takes place on 12 August.

1. Communication objectives

- Our audiences understand what the report's purpose is, and what information is included in it.
- Wellingtonians running for Council are aware of the report and know how to access it.

2. Key messages:

- Wellington is in the midst of a once-in-a-generation transformation to how we live, work and play.
- Whether you are planning to run for a seat on our Council, or preparing to exercise your right to vote, this pre-election report lays out some of the city's most important strategic issues to consider ahead of the 2022 local body elections.
- Over the past three years, the Council has been focused on putting plans in place to ensure that Wellington is a Capital City fit for the future. This includes the Council and its partners committing to infrastructure investment to transform how we live in and move about our city.
- We are updating Wellington's aging infrastructure which is essential for our important growth and development.
- The theme of the report is: A city in transition, a sector in transition.
- The report includes five key challenges:
 - 1) Our infrastructure and planning for growth
 - 2) Our resilience and adaptability

- 3) Our economy
- 4) Our funding and resourcing
- 5) Our changing local government sector

3. Communications approach:

We will communicate with Wellingtonians directly, through our news and social media channels, as well as via the media. We will let the full report speak for itself, but will also break some of the key parts into bite-size news stories and social posts – encouraging those interested to read the full report by directing them to it on our website.

With regards the media, we will send an embargoed copy of the report to key newsrooms ahead of publication in order to give them time to read and interpret the document. We will supply a media release and op-ed from the Chief Executive to accompany the report.

Timing wise, we will publish the report/news release/CE’s op-ed a week before candidate nominations open, then publish smaller articles on *Our Wellington* each day during the following week.

Our key communications channels will be the *Our Wellington* news channel, our owned social media channels, as well as *This Week In Our Wellington* e-newsletter. Website updates and our messaging on these channels will be plain English, clear and simple language.

Commented [KM1]: Only for a week?

Commented [SB2R1]: Yes. Five key challenges, five articles.

4. Audiences and communication channels:

Audience	What they need to know	Channel/s (how we will reach them)
Wellington public	The report is available and can be found on our website and in our libraries. Where the Council is at with its projects, finances, governance, and key challenges.	Our Wellington, social media, web update, TWIOW.
Potential election candidates	The report is available and can be found on our website and in our libraries. Where the Council is at with its projects, finances, governance, and key challenges.	Our Wellington, social media, web update, TWIOW.
Media	The report is available. Where the Council is at with its projects, finances, governance, and key challenges.	Embargoed media release/full PDF report/CE’s op-ed sent to key newsrooms two days before publication.

5. Communication risks and mitigations

Risk	Mitigant

6. Action plan:

Action	Audience	Deadline	Who's responsible
Op-ed signed off	All	Week of 27 June	Anna
Key media contacted to give a heads up as to timings	Media	Week of 27 June	Richard
The Dominion Post briefed on op-ed	Media	Week of 27 June	Seamus/Richard
Final hardcopy report		?	Verity/Averil
Final PDF report		6 July	Verity/Averil
Embargoed report and media release sent to reporters	Media	6 July	Seamus/Richard
Web updates drafted	All	1 July	Ben/Seamus
Draft news stories x 5 ready	All	1 July	Jenni/Seamus
Web content signed off	All	6 July	Ben/Sean/Sophie
Comms Advisory sent to Contact Centre and Service Centre	Contact Centre and Service Centre team leaders	8/9 July	Seamus/Sophie
Changes to web pages live	All	8/9 July	Seamus/Blaze
Internal news story published on Pokapū	Council staff	8/9 July	?
Op-ed published on Our Wellington	All	8/9 July	Seamus
Media release published on Our Wellington	All	8/9 July	Seamus
Key challenges news stories published on Our Wellington	All	11-15 July	Jenni

iMessage
Sun, 10 Jul, 3:05 PM

Hi Barbara. It's Marty Sharpe here -
journalist with Stuff. I have a quick
question re the WCC pre-election
report. Can you talk?

From: [Richard MacLean](#)
To: [Gina Crampton](#)
Cc: [Seamus Boyer](#)
Subject: WCC pre-election report - as discussed
Date: Thursday, 7 July 2022 5:22:00 pm
Attachments: [2022 WCC Pre-Election Report 20220707 v1.0i.pdf](#)

Greetings Gina – here’s the actual pre-election report for your collective delectation. If you folks decide to run the op-ed on Saturday or Monday then you can have this exclusively. If you decide against the op-ed then we’d like to send the report out to general media under embargo to 5am on Monday morning. Enjoy!

Cheers

Richard M – WCC Comms

From: [Richard MacLean](#)
To: [Gina Crampton](#)
Cc: [Seamus Boyer](#)
Subject: RE: PS Gina we'll send you over the report itself either by end-of-play today or first-thing tomorrow - there may be a story or stories in it...
Date: Friday, 8 July 2022 9:21:00 am

All good – not a problem, Gina.

Cheers

Richard M

From: Gina Crampton <gina.crampton@stuff.co.nz>
Sent: Friday, 8 July 2022 9:09 am
To: Richard MacLean <Richard.MacLean@wcc.govt.nz>
Cc: Seamus Boyer <Seamus.Boyer@wcc.govt.nz>
Subject: Re: PS Gina we'll send you over the report itself either by end-of-play today or first-thing tomorrow - there may be a story or stories in it...

Hi Richard, thanks for the oped from Barbara, but I'm afraid we feel it does not meet the threshold for publication.

I've alerted the news desk to look out for the report and media release ahead of the Monday 5am embargo.

Kind regards

Gina

On Thu, Jul 7, 2022 at 3:46 PM Richard MacLean <Richard.MacLean@wcc.govt.nz> wrote:

From: Richard MacLean
Sent: 07 July 2022 15:44
To: Gina Crampton <gina.crampton@stuff.co.nz>; Seamus Boyer <Seamus.Boyer@wcc.govt.nz>
Subject: possible op-ed (approx 600 words) from Barbara McKerrow - WCC - for your consideration

Greetings Gina – here you go. And there's a head-and-shoulders of Barbara attached if you need an illustration.

Cheers

Richard MacLean – WCC Comms

From: Gina Crampton <gina.crampton@stuff.co.nz>
Sent: 07 July 2022 13:02
To: Seamus Boyer <Seamus.Boyer@wcc.govt.nz>
Cc: Richard MacLean <Richard.MacLean@wcc.govt.nz>
Subject: Re:

okay thanks for that. will wait to see the cop from Richard. Patrick may have asked him to send it to opinion@stuff.co.nz

On Thu, Jul 7, 2022 at 12:46 PM Seamus Boyer <Seamus.Boyer@wcc.govt.nz> wrote:

No.

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From: Gina Crampton <gina.crampton@stuff.co.nz>
Sent: Thursday, July 7, 2022 12:44 PM
To: Seamus Boyer <Seamus.Boyer@wcc.govt.nz>
Cc: Richard MacLean <Richard.MacLean@wcc.govt.nz>
Subject: Re:

thanks Seamus, just trying to nail down what we have on Saturday and what we have on Monday. So you don't mind which day it is published?

On Thu, Jul 7, 2022 at 12:41 PM Seamus Boyer <Seamus.Boyer@wcc.govt.nz> wrote:

Hey Gina, good to hear from you.

Saturday would be great.

Richard will be in touch shortly with the copy for you to see if you're keen.

If you are, we'll get you the full pre-election report under embargo as well.

Cheers
Seamus

From: Gina Crampton <gina.crampton@stuff.co.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 7 July 2022 11:22 am
To: Seamus Boyer <Seamus.Boyer@wcc.govt.nz>
Subject:

Hi Seamus, I'm just following up on the oped that Barbara McKerrow is writing on. Patrick P said Richard McLean was looking at it for Monday publication, if we accept it. How committed are you to that day? If it's any good, we might have space for it on Saturday?
Gina

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Gina Crampton
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