

Chief Ombudsman releases first LGOIMA investigation report

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Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier has published the results of his first investigation into how our local authorities are working with the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act (LGOIMA).

The report *LGOIMA compliance and practice in Horowhenua District Council* examines the Council's processes for managing LGOIMA requests, council meetings, and Land Information Memorandum (LIM) reports, identifies what's working well, and makes suggestions for improvement.

"Access to information about a council's actions and decisions is a cornerstone of local democracy," said Mr Boshier.

"I have already published four reports examining official information practice in selected central government agencies. It's also important that I examine how well LGOIMA is being applied by local authorities.

"Horowhenua District Council was 'first off the block' for my local authority investigations, and I'd like to thank all the staff and elected members for their constructive and helpful engagement", Mr Boshier said.

"My overall assessment is that Horowhenua District Council has many elements of good LGOIMA practice. LIM reports are produced on time, meetings follow the requirements for notification, and there are some sound processes and policies in place for dealing with official information requests.

"I also identify ways to further lift LGOIMA performance at the Council, primarily through strong leadership and the inclusion of open information principles in strategy and policy", he said.

"Without doubt, the building blocks are all there. I'm pleased that the Council has already accepted my suggested actions for improving its practice, such as organising training from my Office.

“An open, robust and effective official information regime sits at the very heart of local government practice”, Mr Boshier said. “I encourage Horowhenua District Council to promote good LGOIMA practice as an integral part of being a democratic and accountable organisation”.

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