



6 August 2025

OIAD-1656

9(2)(a)

Dear 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 23 June 2025 requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) of the Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry):

*1. National Water Trading Oversight*

- *Any datasets, reports, or summaries held by the Ministry relating to water take right transfers or trades across New Zealand*
- *Any records or assessments of trading prices, volumes, or market value of consents*

*2. Canterbury Region Focus*

- *Any information held about trading activity in the Canterbury region, including consent transfers under s136 RMA*
- *Whether the Ministry monitors or holds any data from platforms such as HydroTrader or irrigation scheme trading mechanisms*

*3. Policy Position and Future Frameworks*

- *Any current or planned policy work regarding national water trading frameworks, price transparency, or equity of access*
- *References to water trading in the reform of the RMA (Natural and Built Environments Act, Strategic Planning Act)*

On 9 July 2025, you refined the following points of your request:

- That point 1 of your request covers documents from 2010 and later; and
- That you would seek information in-scope of point 2 of your request directly from Environment Canterbury (ECAN), under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA); and
- You confirmed that the second portion of point 3 of your request was for *“...ministerial briefings, Cabinet papers, and other forms of documentation - That relates to, and reiterates the trading of water -...”*

I have identified 10 documents in scope of your request, as listed in the document schedule below.

I am releasing two documents to you in full.

I am releasing one document to you as an excerpt, as provided for under section 16(1)(e) of the Act.

I am withholding one document in full under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act, to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials.

I am refusing six documents, in full, under section 18(d) of the Act as they are already publicly available. Links to where these documents are available can be found in the document schedule, below.

Regarding the portion of your request for “...*current or planned policy work regarding national water trading frameworks, price transparency, or equity of access...*”, the Ministry is withholding information in-scope of this point of your request under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act, to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials.

In terms of section 9(1) of the Act, I am satisfied that, in the circumstances, the withholding of information in this request is not outweighed by other considerations that render it desirable to make the information available in the public interest.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of my decisions relating to this request, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found at: [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz).

Please note that due to the public interest in our work, the Ministry publishes responses to requests for official information shortly after the response has been sent on our website at: <https://environment.govt.nz/about-us/official-information-act-requests/>. If you have any queries about this, please feel free to contact our Ministerial Services team at: [ministerials@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:ministerials@mfe.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely



**Nick Martelli**  
Manager – Natural Resources  
Ministry for the Environment | Manatū Mō Te Taiao

Document schedule

| #   | Date    | Title                                                                                                           | Decision            | Grounds     | Link/Notes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.  | 10/2012 | Potential for Transfer and Trade of Freshwater Permits                                                          | Released in full    | NA          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 2.  | 2014    | [Excerpt of Report] Freshwater Programme: Managing within limits, pressures and opportunities                   | Released as excerpt | 16(1)(e)    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 3.  | 12/2014 | Economics of managing within water quantity limits Waimakariri District                                         | Refused in full     | 18(d)       | Pages 442 to 457 of the following publicly available document:<br><a href="https://environment.govt.nz/assets/OIA/Files/20-D-00014-for-proactive-release-vFinal_0.pdf">https://environment.govt.nz/assets/OIA/Files/20-D-00014-for-proactive-release-vFinal_0.pdf</a>                           |
| 4.  | 03/2015 | Economics of managing within water quantity limits: Waikakariri District - Memo to Ken Taylor and Brett Painter | Refused in full     | 18(d)       | Pages 427 to 441 of the following publicly available document:<br><a href="https://environment.govt.nz/assets/OIA/Files/20-D-00014-for-proactive-release-vFinal_0.pdf">https://environment.govt.nz/assets/OIA/Files/20-D-00014-for-proactive-release-vFinal_0.pdf</a>                           |
| 5.  | 2022    | Paper 2: Resource allocation and user charges                                                                   | Refused in full     | 18(d)       | Publicly available, here: <a href="https://environment.govt.nz/assets/MOG-16-29-March-2022.pdf">https://environment.govt.nz/assets/MOG-16-29-March-2022.pdf</a>                                                                                                                                 |
| 6.  | 03/2025 | Cabinet paper: Replacing the Resource Management Act 1991 - Approach to development of new legislation          | Refused in full     | 18(d)       | Publicly available, here: <a href="https://environment.govt.nz/what-government-is-doing/cabinet-papers-and-regulatory-impact-statements/replacing-the-rma1991/">https://environment.govt.nz/what-government-is-doing/cabinet-papers-and-regulatory-impact-statements/replacing-the-rma1991/</a> |
| 7.  | 03/2025 | Cabinet Economic Policy Committee minute of decision                                                            | Refused in full     | 18(d)       | Publicly available, here: <a href="https://environment.govt.nz/what-government-is-doing/cabinet-papers-and-regulatory-impact-statements/replacing-the-rma1991/">https://environment.govt.nz/what-government-is-doing/cabinet-papers-and-regulatory-impact-statements/replacing-the-rma1991/</a> |
| 8.  | 03/2025 | RIS: Replacing the Resource Management Act 1991- 12 March 2025                                                  | Refused in full     | 18(d)       | Publicly available, here: <a href="https://environment.govt.nz/what-government-is-doing/cabinet-papers-and-regulatory-impact-statements/replacing-the-rma1991/">https://environment.govt.nz/what-government-is-doing/cabinet-papers-and-regulatory-impact-statements/replacing-the-rma1991/</a> |
| 9.  | 03/2025 | [Briefing] BRF-6038 Replacing the RMA – Allocation and Resource Use Charges                                     | Withheld in full    | 9(2)(f)(iv) |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 10. | 03/2025 | [Appendix] Appendix 3 of BRF-6038: Examples of freshwater trading/transfers in New Zealand                      | Released in full    | NA          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |