



29 September 2026

Ref: OIA-2026/27-0214

Jodie Bruning
jodie@bruning.net.nz

Tēnā koe Jodie,

Official Information Act request: Data centres and resource management policy

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), Part A of which was partially transferred to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) by the Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport (MCERT) on 10 September 2026.

The transfer was made under section 14(b)(ii) of the Act, as MCERT determined that information relevant to Part A of your request, while held by MCERT, is more closely connected with the functions of DPMC. Part A of your request is attached as **Appendix 1**.

Information to be withheld

Within the document and emails transferred to us by MCERT, we have identified some information that falls within the scope of Question 5 of Part A of your request. The document is dated 21 August 2026, while the emails – one from DPMC to MCERT, the other from MCERT to DPMC, are dated 14 and 19 August 2026, respectively.

I have decided to withhold the relevant information contained within the document and the emails in full under the following provisions of the Act:

- section 9(2)(f)(iv), to maintain the confidentiality of advice tendered by or to Ministers and officials
- section 9(2)(g)(i), to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion.

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Act. No public interest has been identified that would be sufficient to outweigh the reasons for withholding that information.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my 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 name and contact details will be removed for publication.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Janine Smith', with a stylized, cursive script.

Janine Smith
DCE, Policy and Delivery Unit

Appendix 1 – Original request to MCERT

“Part A — Large and nationally significant developments

1. *Fitness of effects and notification thresholds: Please provide any substantive advice, analysis, research or briefing considering whether the proposed effects-management, affected-party and notification thresholds are appropriate for large-scale, complex or nationally significant developments, noting that publicly notified consents, non-complying activities and the highest-cost 25% of consents were excluded from the principal sample analysed in the December 2025 Resource Management consent data report.*
2. *Public participation: Please provide any analysis considering whether raising affected-party and notification thresholds may reduce opportunities for public participation in decisions concerning large-scale or nationally significant developments, particularly where immediate site effects may be assessed as minor but cumulative infrastructure, resource, environmental or community implications extend beyond the immediate site.*
3. *Cumulative and system-level effects: Please provide any advice or analysis concerning whether existing or proposed resource-management processes adequately identify and assess cumulative or system-level effects of large developments, including cumulative effects arising across multiple developments or activities, and combined demands upon:*
 - *electricity generation and transmission;*
 - *groundwater and surface-water resources;*
 - *land and associated infrastructure;*
 - *environmental limits and resilience; and*
 - *competing or alternative uses of finite infrastructure and natural resources.*
4. *Central, regional and local decision-making. Please provide any advice considering whether national data-centre policy, national direction, Fast-track mechanisms or other central-government interventions may reduce or materially constrain regional or local decision-making concerning the location, scale, resource demands or environmental effects of major data-centre developments.*
5. *Data centres and resource-management reform. Please provide any substantive advice, briefing, analysis or correspondence considering data centres, hyperscale computing infrastructure, AI infrastructure or similarly electricity-intensive digital infrastructure in the development of the Planning Bill, Natural Environment Bill, national policy direction, infrastructure provisions, Fast-track legislation or associated resource-management reforms.*
6. *Planning processes as investment impediments: Please provide any advice considering whether existing district or regional planning, notification, consultation or consenting processes have been identified as impediments to data-centre investment, and any options considered to reduce or remove such impediments.*
7. *Long-term effects and decision horizons: Please provide any advice or analysis concerning the time horizons over which environmental, infrastructure, resource and community effects of large or nationally significant developments are expected to be assessed, including whether assessment frameworks consider cumulative effects, infrastructure dependencies, resource constraints, climate or drought conditions, technological change and other material risks over periods of 25 years or longer.*

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8. *Regional and local authority responsibilities and capacity: Please provide any advice or analysis concerning responsibilities expected to be exercised by regional councils and territorial authorities under the proposed resource-management system in relation to large, complex or nationally significant developments, including.*
- *responsibilities transferred, delegated to, or otherwise expected to be undertaken at regional or local level;*
 - *additional assessment, monitoring, compliance, enforcement or reporting responsibilities;*
 - *technical or specialist expertise required to discharge those responsibilities;*
 - *whether councils have sufficient staffing, expertise, information and institutional capacity to undertake them;*
 - *additional costs expected to be incurred by councils; and*
 - *Crown funding, cost-recovery mechanisms or other resourcing provided or proposed to support those responsibilities.*
9. *Allocation of governmental responsibility: Please provide any analysis identifying functions or decision-making authority transferred from regional or local government to central government under the proposed reforms, and functions, responsibilities or implementation burdens remaining with or transferred to regional councils or territorial authorities, including the rationale and resourcing implications of that allocation.*
10. *Scientific and technical capability: Please provide any assessment of the scientific, technical or analytical capability required by central government, regional councils and territorial authorities to identify and assess cumulative or system-level effects of large and complex developments, including any identified capability or evidence gaps and any funding, research, monitoring or technical-support measures proposed to address them."*