

18 October 2023

s 9(2)(g)(ii)

Thank you for your Official Information Act request, received on 20 September 2023. You requested:

1. The results of any investigations, geological modelling or field testing on regions/areas of aggregate opportunity and/or types of aggregate resources prepared or commissioned by Infrastructure Commission or GNS Science since the May 2021 Science Report, including any mapping and/or data.
2. Any information held by Infrastructure Commission about when studies, reports or data will be released as a follow up to the May 2021 Science Report.

The mapping exercise by GNS released in May 2021 identified suitable aggregate resources throughout New Zealand. The project was aimed at helping councils and others better understand and use the country's aggregate resources. Building on this work, Te Waihanga commissioned GNS to undertake further modelling to identify potential extraction opportunities close to four key areas with limited local aggregate supply but high growth and therefore high aggregate demand –Auckland, Tauranga, Wellington and Queenstown. To do this analysis, GNS is overlaying the original aggregate resource maps with layers showing high landscape, conservation or human impact values.

With regards to 1) of your request, Te Waihanga is part way through a work programme which will result in all the information being publicly available. To date we have seen some results of the initial modelling by GNS but further steps are needed before the information can be released publicly.

While GNS is using publicly available data, the analysis will develop new information that will potentially be of commercial value, so it is important that it is released appropriately; with equal and fair access to all the public and with sufficient engagement with stakeholders. Te Waihanga and GNS will undertake engagement with relevant councils and central government agencies to ensure the data is properly peer-reviewed for accuracy and useability. It will take some time before this process is completed. However, we consider that release of information

prior to this point could result in inaccurate or misleading information in the public domain or an unfair benefit to those who receive information first.

I am therefore withholding this information under the following sections of the Official Information Act:

- section 18(d) – the information requested is or will soon be publicly available
- section 9(2)(k) – to prevent the disclosure of use of official information for improper gain or advantage

With regards to 2) of your request, Te Waihanga will publish the results of this modelling work in the first quarter of the 2024 calendar year. As part of our work with the relevant Regional Councils, we will, at the same time, make the underlying data sets available so they can be accommodated, as much as possible, within the councils' existing regional geospatial mapping tools. We anticipate that this more detailed information, about potential aggregate sources within high-growth regions, will be a valuable resource for local government land use planning processes, including the new regional spatial strategies, as required under the Spatial Planning Act.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) may be published on Te Waihanga's website.

This reply addresses the information you requested. You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision.

Nāku noa, nā



Barbara Tebbs
General Manager, Policy