

16 August 2023

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Bay of Plenty Times/Rotorua Daily Post  
[REDACTED]

REF: OIA-12986

Dear [REDACTED]

### Request made under the Official Information Act 1982

Thank you for your email of 27 June 2023 requesting information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) relating to weather-related road closures and climate change. I have set out your questions and my responses below.

*The total number of weather-related state highway closures over the past five years, broken down by year and region.*

I have provided a spreadsheet, *OIA-12986 weather-related closures*, showing all weather-related closures from 10 July 2018 to 10 July 2023 as extracted from the Traffic Road Event Information System (TREIS). This data may be broken down by date and contractor region. These events have been gathered by their description to determine whether they relate to weather. Please note:

- some events may be triggered by weather, however this will not be the case in all instances
- the regions are Network Outcomes Contract (NOC) regions rather than traditional regions – see <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/roads-and-rail/highways-information-portal/technical-disciplines/network-outcomes-contracts/resources-and-manuals/noc-supplier-maps/> for details
- there may be multiple entries for single events for various reasons, such as changes in status, events that cross NOC boundaries or affect multiple highways, and data entry errors
- road closures are recorded in the logging system TREIS and are events whereby the road is closed to traffic (all lanes), continuously, for 15 minutes or more, regardless of whether or not there is a detour in place
- this information is provided to the Traffic Operation Centres (TOCs) by various sources such as NOCs, NZ Police, councils, and the public.

*The total number of state highway closures by weather event (Please provide the total number of closures by the type of weather event that caused the closure).*

Noting the limitations in the data, the total number of weather-related closures as shown in the spreadsheet are shown in the table below:

Year	Weather-related closures
2018 (partial year, 10 July onwards)	103
2019	190
2020	170
2021	220
2022	345
2023 (partial year, up to 10 July)	313

While the data provided to you may be broken down by event description, the precise type of weather event is not recorded in the available data. I am refusing this under section 18(g)(i) of the Act. This section provides for refusal when the information requested is not held by the department or Minister of the Crown or organisation and the person dealing with the request has no grounds for believing that the information is either held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation, or by a local authority.

*The top five state highways closed due to weather-related incidents over the past five years nationally.*

Noting the limitations with data described above, the top five state highways appearing in the data are shown in the table below:

State Highway	Weather-related closures
State Highway 1	244
State Highway 6	125
State Highway 2	121
State Highway 94	86
State Highway 25	84

*Please provide details of any research, studies, or assessments conducted by Waka Kotahi to evaluate the vulnerability of state highways to climate change impacts, including projected risks and adaptation strategies.*

Waka Kotahi has provided details of its Resilience Programme online, including the National Resilience Programme Business Case. Please see: <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/roads-and-rail/highways-information-portal/technical-disciplines/resilience/national-resilience-programme-business-case/>.

Waka Kotahi has also developed an online tool showing current and future risks to the network (please note this is a work in progress and is still being updated):

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/7f71bcbcea9f4efc9c5c72c2d8cebb7a>.

The following research reports in scope of your request are available online:

- Research Report 671 Developing a method for quantifying transport interdependencies: <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/research/reports/671/>
- Research Report 670 Better measurement of the direct and indirect costs and benefits of resilience: <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/research/reports/670/>
- Research Report 614 Establishing the value of resilience: [https://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/research/reports/614](https://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/research/reports/614/)
- Research Report 546 Measuring the resilience of transport infrastructure: [https://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/research/reports/546](https://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/research/reports/546/)
- Research Report 378 Climate change effects on the land transport network: <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/research/reports/378/>
- Research Report 296 Natural hazard road risk management – part III: performance criteria: [https://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/research/reports/296](https://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/research/reports/296/).

Also in scope of your request is the Tonkin and Taylor report *Coastal Exposure Assessment - Stage 2 Exposure Assessment to Coastal Hazards*. Please find a copy attached.

*Please provide details on insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by Waka Kotahi in transitioning to a low-emissions and climate-resilient transport system, particularly in light of the growing importance of climate change considerations.*

Waka Kotahi is now undertaking climate-related disclosures in its annual reporting. Please see pages 5 to 10 of the following appendix for the 2021-2022 report as an example:

<https://www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/resources/annual-report-nzta/2021-22/waka-kotahi-annual-report-2021-22-section-f.pdf>.

*What is Waka Kotahi's strategic approach to managing the impact of climate change on land transport infrastructure?*

Tiro Rangi is the Waka Kotahi long-term plan for adapting the land transport system to our changing climate. This is available online at: <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/tiro-rangi-our-climate-adaptation-plan-2022-2024/>.

*What are the measures and initiatives implemented by Waka Kotahi to mitigate the effects of climate change?*

Toitū Te Taiao - Our Sustainability Action Plan – sets out the actions Waka Kotahi will take to tackle climate change, improve public health and create a sustainable land transport system. It can be found online at: <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/about-us/about-waka-kotahi-nz-transport-agency/environmental-and-social-responsibility/toitu-te-taiao-our-sustainability-action-plan/>.

Further information about how Waka Kotahi is making changes toward lower emissions and climate-resilient transport can be found online at <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/about-us/about-waka-kotahi-nz-transport-agency/environmental-and-social-responsibility/transport-transition/>.

Under section 28 of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision to refuse some of the information you have requested. The contact details for the Ombudsman can be located at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz).

In line with Waka Kotahi policy, this response will soon be published on our website, with personal information removed.

If you would like to discuss this reply with Waka Kotahi, please contact Andy Knackstedt, Senior Manager, Media, by email to [andrew.knackstedt@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:andrew.knackstedt@nzta.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely



**Lisa Rossiter**

Senior Manager Environment and Sustainability