

From: [LGOIMA](#)
To: [Robin McCarthy](#)
Subject: 865 FB, meetings, tourism, finance, Response
Date: Wednesday, 24 September 2025 12:32:00 pm

Dear Robin

Re: information relating to facebook, meetings, tourism, finance, (Our ref. 865).

We have decided to release the information you have requested; - please see our answers below **in blue**.

Request:

Email 1

1. Who decides on general council agenda items?

Meeting agendas and associated papers are prepared by council staff under the direction of the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Mayor and relevant councillors. The Mayor and councillors can request the inclusion of specific items or papers for consideration by the Council or its committees. The final agenda, along with the accompanying reports, is approved by the meeting chairperson before being presented to the full Council for endorsement/approval at the beginning of the meeting. Council members can choose not to accept a tabled report.

2. What is the quantum of rates collected for Environment Canterbury?

Mackenzie District Council collects regional council rates for the Mackenzie district and the Waitaki district, on behalf of Environment Canterbury

Rates (including penalties) collected for 2024-2025 on behalf of Environment Canterbury were the following:

Mackenzie district regional council rates \$3,347,923

Waitaki district regional council rates \$1,422,535

Email 2

1. When council took over the control of the respective community facebook pages of Fairlie, Tekapo, and Twizel, was this an executive decision or a

Governance decision?

As previously explained, council has had no current or historical involvement with any of the Fairlie community social media sites. The Twizel, Tekapo and Aoraki Mt Cook community Facebook groups were taken on by council during the COVID pandemic. Had council not taken over these pages at the time they would have been closed down and the benefit to the community lost. This decision was made by the (then) Chief Executive. The current acting Mayor and Chief Executive have decided that any decision to change the current status should be made by Elected Members. This is to ensure transparency around the decision making, and, should the outcome be for council to step away from some or all social media sites, to allow elected members to decide a process to identify an appropriate organisation or person(s) to manage them in the future.

2. Who decides on the agenda items for a general council meeting?

Please refer to question 1 response above

3. What is the total cost of operating Mackenzie Tourism in the last financial year and the previous financial year?

Total cost of operating Mackenzie Tourism (RTO) in 2024-2025, 2023-2024

2024-2025 - \$438,618

2023-2024 - \$384,375

90% of the Mackenzie Tourism costs are funded via a targeted rate to commercial, commercial accommodation, secondary accommodation (i.e short term visitor accommodation) and industrial properties.

Note that these are the direct costs only – in addition there are a range of Central Government funding available only to an RTO (Regional Tourism Organisation) which Mackenzie Tourism has been granted – delivered to almost all major events in the District as well as additional Central Government funded promotion and marketing, and Tourism NZ activities in the Mackenzie undertaken by Mackenzie Tourism. Over the last 5 years approximately \$1,900,000 has been successfully applied for and distributed to Mackenzie events and businesses. Recent examples of Central Government funding accessed by Mackenzie Tourism has been the Government's Regional Tourism Boost Fund – Round One (winter 2025), for which we were part of \$600,000 for Central South Island Australia campaign to target winter. (Participating RTOs: Mackenzie, Christchurch, West Coast, Timaru, Kaikoura, Hurunui) and \$680,000 USA campaign which all RTOs across NZ participated in. (These are not included in the core Mackenzie Tourism costs above as the Government funding is paid to and distributed by one RTO on behalf of the others for efficiency).

Tourism NZ also works with RTOs who help to bring activities (such as global activations, famils etc) to life. An example for the Mackenzie was the FIFA world cup activation which generated over \$20mil in earned media which otherwise would not happen. There are many trade and media famils, or the likes of the Tiaki Promise localised campaign around visitor behaviour which Tourism NZ is investing for this summer. These happen because there is a local RTO who is able to assist in the delivery (or in the case of the Tiaki campaign, lobby for investment).

The Government has very recently announced further Regional Tourism Boost Fund funding, being Regional Tourism Boost Fund – Round Two \$10m contestable fund, currently in bid process (to target autumn 2026) and Events Boost Fund \$10m contestable fund.

4. What was paid to the Dunedin consultancy survey company for the recent tourism public survey.

The exact amount is commercially sensitive but our survey provider has agreed we can confirm the cost between \$15,000 and \$20,000. The survey was very useful in gaining a benchmark plus issues of concern to the community – for which we are working with the district's tourism sector to feed into an action plan – plus the Council (via the Acting Mayor and Mackenzie Toursim) has used the results as part of the Council's advocacy to the

Tourism Minister and the government regarding the Council's key visitor issues of concern, such as infrastructure funding, housing, freedom camping and road safety.

5. What interest is council paying to Local Authority Finance Agency (LAFA).

We assume you mean the Local Authority Funding Agency (LGFA) of which Council is a member and has borrowings with.

Total interest paid for 2024-2025 was \$1,261,327 and average cost of interest was 4.28%

6. How much is currently borrowed from LAFA.

We assume you mean the Local Authority Funding Agency (LGFA)

Total borrowings at 30 June 2025 \$23,100,000

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision.

Information about how to make a complaint is available at

www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss this further with us, please feel free to contact me.

Please note, as outlined in the candidate handbook, all LGOIMA requests lodged by electoral candidates are required to be made available to all other candidates.

'Council is required to respond to information requests made under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA). Any information supplied to a candidate as part of a LGOIMA request response will be shared to all candidates as soon as possible after the original information release.'

Details of the request, the response, and any information provided by council will be published on the council website, in the 'elections' section. All candidates will be notified by email when the response is posted to the website.

Yours sincerely,

Nic