

Our Reference: A1382358

27 August 2020

Mike Riddell

Email: [fyi-request-13217-e8084ec3@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-13217-e8084ec3@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Mr Riddell

**Official information request for email correspondence between Councillor Michael Laws and other Councillors**

I refer to your official information request dated 2 July 2020. A copy of your request is set out below.

*I seek all email correspondence between Councillor Michael Laws on his ORC assigned email (Michael.Laws@orc.govt.nz) and other Councillors in the period 1 February 2020 and 30 June 2020. This is material vital to a defence against charges of defamation issued against me by Cr Laws. Your speedy response is appreciated.*

On 24 July 2020, we extended the timeframe for responding to your request to 27 August 2020.

We have interpreted your request as applying to emails between Councillor Laws and other councillors within the specified time frames, and we have treated a small number of other emails from members of the public to individual councillors as out of scope.

If you wish for the Otago Regional Council (“Council”) to consider these other emails that are not communications between councillors, we would need to consult the other persons concerned to check whether they consent to release of the emails. In the absence of their express permission, their emails would properly be withheld under section 7(2)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (“LGOIMA”) to protect their personal privacy.

We have decided to grant your request in part. The information is available from the drop box which is provided along with this letter. If you wish to receive a hard copy of these documents, please advise your postal address.

Part of your request has been refused to:

*For our future*

1. Not prejudice the maintenance of the law, including the prevention, investigation, and detection of offences under section 6(a) of the LGOIMA.
2. Protect the privacy of natural persons under section 7(2)(a) of the LGOIMA.
3. Protect information that is subject to an obligation of confidence, where the making of that information would be likely to otherwise damage the public interest under section 7(2)(c)(ii).
4. Maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to members or officers or employees of the local authority under section 7(2)(f)(i) of the LGOIMA.
5. Maintain legal professional privilege under section 7(2)(g) of the LGOIMA.

The information that has been refused is shown as redacted on the documents along with the appropriate section of the LGOIMA relied upon.

To avoid duplication, full email chains of correspondence have been provided rather than supplying each email separately.

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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that the Council may publish our response to your request on its website. If the information is published, your personal information will be removed.

Yours sincerely



James Gribble  
**Administration Officer- Legal**