

17 April 2023

LGOIMA No. 8140011584
(Please quote this in any correspondence)

P Elliott
By Email: fyi-request-22140-f0bb8f29@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe P Elliott

Local Government Official Information And Meetings Act 1987

Permits issued for film and television

Thank you for your information request dated 18 March 2023, regarding film permits and filming in the Te Henga Bethells Beach area. The specific details of your request and our response is below.

Please advise the list of permits issued for film and/or television location activities on public or private land in the Te Henga Bethells Beach valley and coastal area, since 1 January 2018.

Please advise the fees paid by permits approved and granted to production companies (and the like) to Auckland Council for location services activities since 1 January 2018.

Please note Auckland Council only issues permits for filming on public open spaces. Filming on private land does not require a permit but is subject to Auckland Council bylaws.

Please refer to the attached list of permits issued by Screen Auckland – a division of Tātaki Auckland Unlimited (TAU) on behalf of Auckland Council, and the fees associated with those permits.

The fees collected were in line with the schedule set out in the Auckland Film Protocol. About 80 per cent of fees collected are transferred by TAU to Auckland Council at the end of the respective financial year. The council then passes the fee revenue to the relevant decision makers within the council group – which in the case of Te Henga Bethells could be Waitākere Ranges Local Board, Auckland Transport or Regional Parks. That is in line with the council's intention for the bulk of permit fees to benefit the communities where filming takes place. It is then up to the decision maker to spend the fee revenue how it sees fit.

Please advise if there are any other Auckland Council revenue stream attributed to film and television location activities, other than permit processing.
For example, are there any lump sum or regular payments made by film and television production companies (and the like) to Auckland Council.

Auckland Council does not receive any lump sums or revenue other than permit fees for location activities. However, as operator of Auckland Film Studios and Kumeu Film Studios,

TAU earns revenue from licensing the studios to domestic and international productions. Producers regularly augment their studio use with shoots in the region's famed west coast locations such as Te Henga Bethells. The availability of these unique 'looks' is often a significant reason why producers choose Auckland as their main production base.

Apart from permit revenue, what tangible benefits are there to the Te Henga Bethells Beach residents to grant film and television location activities to occur in the community?

Is the impact of film and television location activities on the unique environment, public amenities, roads and infrastructure commensurate with the location permit fees (or other payments) received?

Auckland's screen industry delivers more than \$1.5 billion in GDP into the regional economy, and many of the 8400 people employed across more than 2300 screen businesses reside in the region's west Auckland screen heartland – including some in the Te Henga Bethells area.

Screen industry workers

Multiple generations of the local community work in the screen industry. Filming at Te Henga Bethells allows them to work close to home, reducing screen productions' footprint and travel movements (both people and equipment) in and out of the area. These are valuable career pathways for locals, according to Te Henga-based screen industry members.

Landowners

Several local landowners regularly hire their properties to screen productions of all types (TV commercials through to large series and feature films) as bases for equipment and personnel, and as filming locations – securing commercial fees which provide valuable year-round income.

TAU has been told this has meant some local families have been able to keep their land intact (as farms or undeveloped green space) rather than having to divide or develop. This has helped retain the special features of Te Henga Bethells.

Donations to the community

Many screen productions develop a close relationship with the area, and have chosen to donate to Te Henga Bethells organisations. For example, to the local surf club which needs philanthropy to keep going. Productions also hire the surf clubrooms and engage the club's services for safety (e.g. a young lifeguard employed to support the production with H&S on set, which in turn provides skills development and income to the individual/club).

Productions engage with, and employ the services of, the local environmental group (including as dotterel minders) to ensure environmental sustainability when filming takes place on the beach.

Improvements

There are often improvements made to Te Henga Bethells (and other) locations by screen productions. For example, if access for filming is not good enough, or may be impacted by the production, the company involved may put down roading metal at their cost. This is a positive legacy for locals.

Waitākere Ranges Local Board is involved in the approval process for film permits issued in the Te Henga Bethells area where it is the 'land owner', and (as noted above) it receives a portion of the film permit fees raised in its governance area to spend how it sees fit.

Auckland Council's Auckland Film Protocol, last updated in 2019 in collaboration with industry and approved by elected councillors, is designed to ensure that Auckland grows its status as a global destination for screen production talent, investment and business, while protecting the region's environment, heritage and people.

Please refer to the publicly available protocol for: full explanations about council's film permit approval process; the film industry code of conduct related to filming in sensitive environments etc.; and a schedule of council's film permit fees.

https://www.aucklandnz.com/sites/build_auckland/files/media-library/documents/2019-Auckland-Film-Protocol.pdf

The decision by Auckland Council to release the information contained in this response was made by **Pam Ford**, Director Investment & Industry, Tātaki Auckland Unlimited.

Should you believe Auckland Council has not responded appropriately to your request you have the right to seek a review of the decision from the Ombudsman.

If you have any further queries please contact me on 09 301 0101, quoting LGOIMA No. 8140011584.

Ngā mihi



Jenny Hua
Senior Privacy & Official Information Business Partner
Governance Services