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16 July 2025

By email: [REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

## Official Information request and response

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act ("OIA") dated 24 June 2025.

You have requested the following information relating to the Local Democracy Reporting (LDR) programme administered by NZ On Air:

1. *Purpose and Scope of LDR Funding*
  - a) *The stated objectives and scope of the LDR programme, including the specific activities or types of reporting the funding is intended to support.*
  - b) *Any documentation (e.g. guidelines, contracts, programme descriptions) outlining what LDR funds may or may not be used for.*
2. *Recipients of LDR Funding*
  - a) *A list of media organisations or entities currently receiving LDR funding, including the amount of funding allocated to each since 2022.*
  - b) *Confirmation of whether funding is paid directly to newsrooms, managing agencies (e.g. RNZ), or via third parties.*
3. *Use and Management of LDR Funds*
  - a) *Any documentation outlining how recipients are expected to account for their use of LDR funding (e.g. financial reporting requirements, editorial reporting obligations).*
  - b) *A description of any contractual or reporting obligations imposed on recipients to demonstrate appropriate use of funds.*
4. *Oversight and Accountability*
  - a) *Details of any monitoring, auditing, or performance assessment processes undertaken by NZ On Air to ensure LDR funding is used as intended.*
  - b) *Any internal or external evaluations of the LDR programme conducted since 2022.*
  - c) *Any complaints, concerns, or issues raised internally or externally regarding the use of LDR funding*

Please find our response below:

1. Please find attached a copy of the funding agreement with a copy of the funding proposal for LDR 2025. We have made some redactions in both documents under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA to protect the privacy of natural persons and section 9(2)(b)(ii) of the OIA to protect information where the making available of the information would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information.

2. To clarify, LDR allows newsrooms to employ a reporter who will report on and cover local authority, political and civil matters on a daily basis. Given that LDR funds roles and the funding is tied to the remuneration of these reporters, we decline to release the amount allocated to each organisation under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA to protect the privacy of natural persons.

The programme is operated by RNZ and jointly funded by RNZ and NZ On Air. NZ On Air's funding is allocated to RNZ as per [our website](#) and we are not involved in assessing and approving host newsrooms nor paying host newsrooms directly. Below is a list of where LDR reporters are/were in place since 2022:

- a. 2025 (current) – please see RNZ website: <https://www.rnz.co.nz/ldr>.
  - b. 2024 – Allied Press, Ashburton Guardian, Awa FM, The Gisborne Herald, Nelson Weekly, Pacific Media Network, Sun Media, Te Korimako o Taranaki, Whakaata Māori, Whakatane Beacon, Wairarapa Times-Age, NZME Publishing, Stuff,
  - c. 2022 and 2023 – Sun Media, Te Korimako o Taranaki, Wairarapa Times-Age, Allied Press, Ashburton Guardian, Awa FM, Whakatāne Beacon, Gisborne Herald, Grey Star, NZME Publishing, Pacific Media Network, Stuff
3. Please see the funding agreement for LDR provided in the response at 1, which contains what reporting NZ On Air requires from RNZ. NZ On Air is not involved with contracting with the host newsrooms or any editorial decisions.
  4. We can provide the following information on oversight and accountability
    - a. Please find linked here the [2020 Review](#) and [2023 review](#) of LDR by Gavin Ellis, which are available on our website.
    - b. NZ On Air has not received any complaints, concerns or issues raised internally or externally regarding the use of LDR funding. We decline this part of your request under section 18(e) of the OIA on grounds the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist.

For your information, funding provided by NZ On Air for all successful projects is [searchable](#) on our website. You can also [sign up](#) to receive our regular industry newsletter via our website.

You have the right to refer this response to the Ombudsman if you are dissatisfied with it. More information on how to do this is [here](#). NZ On Air proactively releases information in accordance with the Government's commitment to the Open Government Partnership National Action Plan. This includes publishing responses to requests for information under the OIA. Please note that this response (with your name removed) will be published on the NZ On Air website shortly and will remain on our website for 12 months.

Thank you for your interest in our work.

Ngā manaakitanga,



Raewyn Rasch

**HEAD OF OPERATIONS, PARTNERSHIPS AND CULTURE**

**KAIHAUTŪ NGĀ WHAKAHAERE, NGĀ RANGIPŪ MAHITAHĪ ME TE AHUREA**

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