

27 February 2023

s9(2)(a)

Dear s9(2)(a)

Thank you for your request, received on 8 February 2023, for the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

1. *“The amount of funding it provides to help support the Consumer PowerSwitch website.*
2. *How long has it been funding the Consumer PowerSwitch Website*
3. *What it expects in the form of performance / return / Key Performance indicators for its investment*
4. *if there is a contract and how long these payments will continue*
5. *if there is an independent pitch process / RFP process to provide funding to similar operations.*
6. *If the EA would consider funding more than one service to increase the chance of helping consumers receive a better outcome.”*

The Electricity Authority (Authority) has a contract with Consumer NZ under which it now provides funding of \$1.2m per year. Invoicing records show the earliest payment to support the function of the Powerswitch website was made to Consumer NZ in July 2015.

The funding provided by the Authority is to help achieve the Authority’s legal obligation to promote consumer interests and competition. The Authority expects Consumer NZ to undertake public promotion and advertising, and to maintain and develop the Powerswitch website. The Authority receives a range of information about this, and there are several key performance indicators. For example, the website has minimum levels of availability, and the Authority receives reporting about changes in website traffic and switching levels as a result of advertising campaigns. The Authority is withholding details regarding key performance indicators under section 9(2)(b)(ii) of the Act as 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. The Authority has not made a financial investment and does not expect a financial return.

The Authority does hold a contract with Consumer NZ and payments will continue until the end of the contract which expires in June 2023. The Authority is withholding details regarding the current contract terms under section 9(2)(b)(ii) of the Act as 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 and under 9(2)(k) to prevent the disclosure or use of official information for improper gain or improper advantage.

The Authority follows the Government Procurement Rules and undertakes open procurement processes as appropriate. Such opportunities are publicly available on the Government Electronic Tender Service (GETS) website. Registering on the site will enable alerts to be sent for relevant opportunities.

The Authority has not decided whether future procurement should continue the model of a single provider or be for multiple providers.

I am satisfied, in terms of section 9(1) of the Act, that the need to withhold the information referred to above is not outweighed by other considerations that render it desirable, in the public interest, to make the information available.

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 decision with us, please feel free to contact us by emailing oiia@ea.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Peter Kerr', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Peter Kerr
GM Legal, Monitoring and Compliance (Acting)