



New Zealand Taxpayers' Union Incorporated

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09 November 2013

Kevin Lavery
Chief Executive
Wellington City Council

By email: kevin.lavery@wcc.govt.nz

Dear Mr Lavery,

URGENT REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION

1. We are concerned at what appears to be incorrect information provided by the Council in relation to its spending on website development and design
2. As you may be aware, over some months, and before the Union publicly launched, a number of *Taxpayers' Union* volunteers began collating information on the relative performance and cost of New Zealand councils. As part of that process we have had filed a number of information requests relating to items of sensitive expenditure such as credit cards and international travel and website development costs. We were particularly interested in Wellington's website spend, due to the public recognition and an award for 'best interactive design' from the Designers Institute of New Zealand.
3. For spending on website development, we compared the expenditure since 1 July 2011 of all Councils that serve a population of over 15,000.
4. We sourced the Wellington City Council from the Council's response to my information request received on 17 October 2013 (attached). The response suggests that the Council had spent \$317,726 on web design and development, including the rebuild of wellington.govt.nz.
5. We used the information the Council provided in our analysis we made publicly available on our website.¹ We also made a number of public comments, including a press release that was critical of the relative amount spent by Marlborough District Council, compared to Wellington City.²
6. Since our public comments, it has been brought to our attention previous public comments on behalf of the Council that in fact the wellington.govt.nz website cost ratepayers nearly \$1.7million. We have been provided with a response to an earlier information request by Matt Lane for substantially the same information.

¹ Refer to <http://taxpayers.org.nz/pages/councilwebsites>

² See <http://bit.ly/1awCiNt>

7. We are disappointed that it appears, at best, the Council has not been upfront in answering the questions we put to it. For example, how can the total amount spent on 'design, front-end development and user testing' be \$314,000 (as stated in the Council's response to my request), but 'development' and 'testing' for wellington.govt.nz equal \$1,079,000 (as stated in the Council's response to Mr Lane)?
8. While it is always difficult to get precisely comparable information, we are determined to be accurate in our analysis and comparisons when making public comments. We ask the Council to urgently reconcile the apparent inconsistency.
9. We will withhold lodging a complaint with the Ombudsman and making any public comment until close of business Monday. If there is an innocent explanation or more time is required, please contact me without delay on one of the telephone numbers below.

Yours faithfully
New Zealand Taxpayers' Union Inc.



Jordan Williams
Executive Director
Jordan@taxpayers.org.nz
Direct Dial: 04 282 0301
Mobile: 021 762 542

cc Sally Dossor, Head of Democratic Services.

Attached:

1. Response to Matt Lane's request for official information dated 18 April 2013
2. Response to Jordan Williams' request for official information dated 17 October 2013

18 April 2013

Matt Lane
 FYI.org.nz

By email to: fyi-request-800-c58357f4@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Lane

Thank you for your information request, received by the Council on 26 March 2013, requesting information about the cost breakdown for the redevelopment of the Council's website. I have been asked to provide you with a response.

Specifically, you asked the following:

"It was reported in Computer World that the recent redevelopment of the Wellington City Council website cost NZ\$1.7M.

Could you please provide whatever documents you can on the breakdown of costs of the project (both expected costs at the start and actual costs at the end) and any project documentation?

I would like to see whether that was the intended budget, and how the money was spent."

At the outset of the project, the expected cost of the website redevelopment, and the amount originally budgeted by the Council was \$1,500,000 (One million five hundred thousand dollars). This included labour costs and all capital expenditure.

The final cost of the website redevelopment project was \$1,698,000. This was broken down as detailed in the following table.

Breakdown of Costs	Total
Business Analysis	\$144,000
Development	\$998,000
Testing	\$80,000
Content Management	\$195,000
Project Governance/Management	\$273,000
Reviews (Legal, Accessibility)	\$7,000
Total	\$1,697,000



As you advised in your original communication, the Council reported the cost of the website redevelopment on www.computerworld.co.nz on 26 March 2013. Further detailed information was provided by Richard MacLean, Principal Media Advisor, as a comment on the article. In his comment, Richard advised the following:

“The Council's old website was designed and built in 2004 - it was largely a static site with a mix of different web applications on different platforms using different technologies. This very large project involved a complete redesign and rebuild of Wellington.govt.nz.

With the public wanting to access more information and services online, we have invested in a new website to respond to this demand (use of the website has increased from 70,000 visits per month in 2003 to an average of 200,000 per month in 2012).

The new site enables us to do more online, including developing online transactions. It is a major part of providing better services for ratepayers. It has been designed and built from customers' perspective (eg the home page features the most 'popular' or accessed links).

What are the improvements?

#People can find information faster and more easily - with a simplified site structure, better navigation and more powerful search function.

#It is easier for people to complete services online.

#As mentioned in the story, the site can be easily accessed on mobile devices such as Smartphones and tablets.

#A new CMS means:

o it is easier to update and add new content

o we can be more responsive with immediate online information eg, for emergency communications such as major weather events, civil defence emergencies, slips, burst water mains etc

o more efficient use of staff time and reduced costs.

Robust servers hosting the site mean that it can handle high internet traffic eg, during local emergencies or events.

The new website will meet e-Government guidelines for accessibility.

More online services and transactions can be added in future.

How much did it cost?

The project has an estimated cost of \$1.7m. This includes project management, website design, development, software licensing, testing, content development and migration, hardware and support.

Who are the vendors?

##DNA - website design and front-end development

##Datacom - website development and build of CMS

##Fronde - Google search function

##Empathy - development of user personas

##Insomnia - security testing

##QualIT - performance testing

Scale of the project

*All content on the old website was 'migrated' to the new CMS, having been reviewed, updated and rewritten during the previous year (977 static pages were involved, plus migration of several different databases).
Every online service had to be rebuilt, along with every page, table and form. All images were reviewed - new ones found and larger images created.*

Techie stuff

The CMS used is Sitecore.

A more powerful search engine - Google Search Appliance - replaces Google Mini.

Deeper and broader web analytics will be available from the new site - showing usage trends, most popular content, identifying problems etc.

Usability testing was conducted in line with industry best practice, meeting the recommended Government Web Guidelines 2.0.

Survey Gizmo will be used to create complex forms and reports.

The project was run using Agile methodology (the first time the Council has successfully used it for a project of this size)."

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely



Chris Brown

Issues Resolution Office

Wellington City Council

Ph: (04) 801 3479

Email: chris.brown@wcc.govt.nz

From: Deborah Howse <Deborah.Howse@wcc.govt.nz>
Date: Thursday, 17 October 2013 5:52 PM
To: Jordan Williams <jhw1986@gmail.com>
Cc: Ian Hunter <ian.Hunter@wcc.govt.nz>
Subject: Website design costs over \$15,000.00 since 1 July 2011- Information Request to WCC-

Hi Jordon

Thanks for talking with me yesterday and your patience while I have sourced the relevant information following your request dated 30 July 2013. Unfortunately, we were unable to find any record of where/who the request was forwarded onto for a response after you brought this to our attention via a follow-up email to Ian Hunter on 6 October 2013. Please accept our apologies for this oversight.

That said, I have now found the information held in relation to your two questions and I advise the following;

A) Yes, the Council did spend over \$15,000.00 since 1 July 2011.

There was design work as part of the rebuild of Wellington.govt.nz, launched in February 2013 and the associated costs are;

Design, front-end development and user testing = \$314,000

Design work carried out for a new online service = Concept development and design: \$3,726

B) Yes, the Council does record traffic to the site, using Google Analytics.

I hope this gives you sufficient information for your deadline tomorrow. Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Regards

Deborah Howse

Deborah Howse

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