



Jodie Bruning
jodie@bruning.net.nz

16 September 2026

Kia ora Jodie

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) for information about data centres, received by the Ministry of Cities, Environment, Regions, and Transport (the Ministry) on 29 August 2026.

I am writing to notify you that the Ministry has transferred Part B of your request to Environment Southland, Invercargill City Council, and Southland District Council as it relates to their respective responsibilities, for response under section 14 of the Act, as we believe that the information to this part of your request relates is more closely connected with its functions. You will hear further from these councils regarding Part B of your request. For reference, the wording of Part B of your request is included as Appendix 1.

The Ministry will provide a response to the remainder of your request no later than 25 September 2026, unless an extension is applied and duly notified.

If you would like to discuss this decision with us, please do not hesitate to contact us at OIA@mcert.govt.nz.

You have a right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision to transfer part of your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi

Lachlan Brown

Kaihautū rūpū | Team Leader – Ministerial Services

Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions, and Transport

Appendix 1 – details of transferred request

Part B — Makarewa Datagrid development

Please provide substantive advice, assessments, briefings, reports, commissioned research and relevant correspondence held by MCERT or its predecessor agencies concerning the Makarewa Datagrid development, addressing the following matters:

- 1. National public-interest assessment: Any assessment of whether facilitating the Makarewa Datagrid development represents a net public benefit or is in the national public interest, including consideration of its anticipated electricity demand, alternative uses of electricity-system capacity, electricity prices, additional generation or transmission requirements, infrastructure costs and who ultimately bears those costs.*
- 2. Electricity-system capacity: Any advice, analysis or information held or received by MCERT concerning the implications of the Makarewa development's anticipated electricity demand of approximately 280 MW, including generation sufficiency, transmission or network capacity, additional generation or storage requirements, resilience, electricity pricing and opportunity costs associated with alternative uses of available or additional electricity-system capacity.*
- 3. Groundwater and aquifer capacity: Any hydrogeological assessment, advice or analysis held, received, commissioned or relied upon by MCERT concerning groundwater abstraction associated with the Makarewa development, including:*
 - aquifer capacity and recharge;*
 - cumulative abstraction;*
 - long-term sustainability;*
 - drought or low-recharge conditions;*
 - effects upon other users or connected water bodies; and*
 - whether existing regulatory requirements provide for adequate assessment of cumulative aquifer effects for developments of this scale.*
- 4. Land and alternative uses: Any assessment of the opportunity costs or public-interest implications associated with using the Makarewa site for the Datagrid development, including its previous or potential productive use and the application of protections for highly productive land or specified infrastructure.*
- 5. Ownership and controlling interests: Any advice or analysis concerning the ownership, ultimate beneficial ownership, financing or controlling interests of the Makarewa Datagrid development, including whether the project's ownership structure was considered relevant to assessment of national or regional benefit, accountability, economic benefits accruing within New Zealand, community engagement or long-term control of strategically important infrastructure.*
- 6. Electricity supplier and equity ownership: Any advice or analysis concerning Mercury NZ Limited's roles as an electricity generator, prospective electricity supplier to Datagrid and equity investor in the Datagrid project, including consideration of competition, electricity-market implications, alignment of commercial incentives, infrastructure investment incentives, or implications for assessment of the project's public benefit, and any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest identified by officials.*
- 7. Public participation and non-notification: Any advice, assessment or correspondence held by MCERT concerning the decision that the Makarewa Datagrid resource-consent applications*

could proceed without public notification, including any consideration of whether the scale, national significance, cumulative resource demands or wider infrastructure implications of the project warranted broader public participation.

- 8. Local-authority capability and central-government support: Any advice, assessment or correspondence held by MCERT concerning whether Southland District Council, Environment Southland or other relevant local authorities had sufficient technical expertise, staffing, information and resources to assess matters associated with the Makarewa Datagrid development, including cumulative environmental and groundwater effects, infrastructure demands and other system-level effects, and whether central-government technical, scientific, financial or other assistance was provided or considered.*
- 9. Where matters material to assessment of the Makarewa development fell outside the statutory responsibilities, expertise or assessment capacity of the relevant regional or local authorities, please provide any advice identifying which central-government agency or other body was responsible for assessing those matters.*
- 10. Fast-track versus ordinary consenting: Any advice or analysis concerning the relationship between Datagrid's application for inclusion in the Fast-track regime and its subsequent progression through ordinary regional and district consenting processes, including any assessment of the project's national or regional significance under the respective processes.*
- 11. Integrated assessment: Please provide any assessment bringing together the project's electricity demand, water requirements, land use, infrastructure requirements, ownership and control, environmental effects, economic benefits and costs, community effects and public-participation implications in determining whether the Makarewa development represents a net public benefit to New Zealand. If no integrated assessment of this kind has been undertaken or is held by MCERT, please confirm this explicitly.*