

Release of Information

Please note that submissions are subject to the OIA and the Privacy Act 2020. In line with this, MBIE intends to upload copies of submissions received to MBIE's website at www.mbie.govt.nz. MBIE will consider you to have consented to uploading by making a submission unless you clearly specify otherwise in your submission. MBIE will take your views into account when responding to requests under the OIA and publishing submissions. Any decision to withhold information requested under the OIA can be reviewed by the Ombudsman.

Privacy statement

The information provided in your submission will be used to inform MBIE and other interested agencies' final recommendations to government on the design of a levy to recover the Commerce Commission's costs for economic regulation of water services. Your submission will also become official information, which means it may be requested under the Official Information Act 1982 (**OIA**). The OIA specifies that information is to be made available upon request unless there are sufficient grounds for withholding it.

Use and release of information

To support transparency in our decision-making, MBIE proactively releases a wide range of information. MBIE will upload copies of all submissions to its website at www.mbie.govt.nz. Your name, and/or that of your organisation, will be published with your submission on the MBIE website unless you clearly specify you would like your submission to be published anonymously. Please tick the box provided if you would like your submission to be published anonymously i.e., without your name attached to it.

If you consider that we should not publish any part of your submission, please indicate which part should not be published, explain why you consider we should not publish that part, and provide a version of your submission that we can publish (if we agree not to publish your full submission). If you indicate that part of your submission should not be published, we will discuss with you before deciding whether to not publish that part of your submission.

We encourage you not to provide personally identifiable or sensitive information about yourself or others except if you feel it is required for the purposes of this consultation.

Personal information

All information you provide will be visible to the MBIE officials who are analysing the submissions and/or working on related policy matters, in line with the Privacy Act 2020. The Privacy Act 2020 includes principles that guide how personal information can be collected, used, stored and disclosed by agencies in New Zealand. Please refrain from including personal information about other people in your submission.

Contacting you about your submission

MBIE officials may use the information you provide to contact you regarding your submission. By making a submission, MBIE will consider you to have consented to being contacted, unless you clearly specify otherwise in your submission.

Viewing or correcting your information

We may share this information with other government agencies, in line with the Privacy Act 2020 or as otherwise required or permitted by law. This information will be securely held by MBIE. Generally, MBIE keeps public submission information for ten years. After that, it will be destroyed in line with

MBIE's records retention and disposal policy. You have the right to ask for a copy of any personal information you provided in this submission, and to ask for it to be corrected if you think it is wrong. If you'd like to ask for a copy of your information, or to have it corrected, please contact MBIE by emailing competition.policy@mbie.govt.nz.

Submission information

(Please note we require responses to all questions marked with an *)

Release of information

Please let us know if you would like any part of your submission to be kept confidential.

☐ I would like my submission (or identified parts of my submission) to be kept confidential, and **have stated below** my reasons and grounds under the Official Information Act that I believe apply, for consideration by MBIE.

I would like my submission (or identified parts of my submission) to be kept confidential because
[\[Insert text\]](#)

[To check the boxes above: Double click on box, then select 'checked']

1. Personal details and privacy	
1.	I have read and understand the Privacy Statement above. Please tick Yes if you wish to continue* [To check the boxes below Double click on box, then select 'checked'] ☒ Yes ☐ No
2.	What is your name?* Stace Lower
3.	Do you consent to your name being published with your submission?* ☒ Yes ☐ No
4.	What is your email address? Please note this will not be published with your submission.* Privacy of natural persons
5.	What is your contact number? Please note this will not be published with your submission.*

	Privacy of natural persons
6.	Are you submitting as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?*
	☐ Individual (skip to 8) ☒ Organisation
7.	If on behalf of an organisation, we require confirmation you are authorised to make a submission on behalf of this organisation.
	☒ Yes, I am authorised to make a submission on behalf of my organisation
8.	If you are submitting on behalf of an organisation, what is your organisation's name? Please note this will be published with your submission.
	Ōpōtiki District Council
9.	If you are submitting on behalf of an organisation, which of these best describes your organisation? Please tick one.
	☒ Territorial authority ☐ Regional council ☐ Existing regulated supplier under the Commerce Act 1986 ☐ Consumer organization ☐ Non-governmental organisation ☐ Academic Institution ☐ Central government ☐ Iwi, hapū or Māori organisation ☐ Academic/Research ☐ Other. Please describe:

Responses to questions

The Competition Policy team welcomes your feedback on as many sections as you wish to respond to, please note you do not need to answer every question.

Part 1: Levy structure	
1.	What are your views on the preferred option for a levy to fully recover the costs of the Commission's new functions from 1 July 2025 onwards from regulated water services suppliers, excluding litigation and Crown Monitor costs for Watercare? Please provide reasons. We do not support the Levy. This should be 100% funded by the Crown. The role of the regulator is in the best interest of all NZ residents and as such should be funded by the crown. This levy adds to the growing financial burden imposed by regulatory authorities, despite the objectives of the Local Water Done Well legislation, which include ensuring that water services are delivered at the lowest possible cost to consumers and businesses. The rationale provided by MBIE—that regulated suppliers, who drive the need for the Commission's functions, should bear the costs—is problematic. It overlooks the fact that this approach places the entire cost burden on ratepayers. Given that everyone benefits from the delivery of high-quality water services, there is a clear role for Crown funding to ensure a more equitable model. Without such funding, there is a significant risk that other essential, planned works may remain incomplete in order to cover the costs of regulation.
Part 2: Levy design	
2.	What are your views on the proposed levy design? We would like the Commission to direct how the levy is derived and how this is split across water, waste water and storm waters respectively, so we can understand costs (apportionment).
3.	How would the proposed levy design impact on your organisation (whether now or in the future)? Please provide your assessment of the nature and extent of these impacts. Significant issue – we will need to consult with our communities through our annual plan process as this is an additional cost not currently included in the LTP. The additional burden of administering the levy will also be an issue as we have limited resources.
4.	Do you have any comments on how the levy design could be improved? Please provide reasons.

Part 3: Levy apportionment	
5.	Do you have any comments on the preferred option for apportionment of the levy to each regulated supplier?
	Crown funding would provide greater efficiency by eliminating the administrative burden of the levy from both the Commerce Commission and the local authorities. A 100% crown funded model would also provide greater incentive for cost containment within the regulatory authorities.
6.	How would the proposed method of apportionment impact on your organisation (whether now or in the future)? Please provide your assessment of the nature and extent of these impacts.
	Significant issue – we will need to consult with our communities through our annual plan process as this is an additional cost not currently included in the LTP. The additional burden of administering the levy will also be an issue as we have limited resources.
7.	Do you have any comments on alternative options to apportion the levy? If another option is preferred, please provide reasons.
	As mentioned, we'd like the use of Crown funding to be considered.
Part 4: Levy implementation	
8.	Do you see any issues with your implementation of the levy (receipt of invoices, payment and passing the cost on as you may determine)? If so, what are those issues?
	With the cost of living it is already a challenge collecting rates. There is a risk that residents simply do not pay the levy which will add additional burden to debt collection.
9.	Would the proposed implementation approach create any challenges for your organisation? If so, what would these be in practice and are there solutions you wish to propose?
	As previously mentioned, this levy represents an unbudgeted and unforeseen expense that falls outside councils' planning timeframes. This creates a risk that other planned and budgeted projects may remain incomplete in order to fund the regulation. We will need to consult with our communities through our annual plan

	process as this is an additional cost not currently included in the LTP. The additional burden of administering the levy will also be an issue as we have limited resources.
10.	Do you have a preference for when the levy should be reviewed next? If so, why?
General Comments:	

Thank you

We appreciate you sharing your thoughts with us. Please find all instructions for how to return this form to us on the first page.