

OIR: 2223/363

1 September 2022



Request for Information under the Local Government and Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act)

Thank you for your email of 22 August 2022 requesting the following information:

I have been tasked with the challenge of researching the effects social media engagement has had on our regional councils in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

The purpose of this research is to determine if the platform social media provides for our regional councils generates more engagement from our communities, not only in traffic directed to your posts, but also in the feedback received by them.

I am reaching out to a variety of regional councils who have used social media as a platform to ask a few questions:

- 1. Has the decision to move to social media generated more engagement from your community?*

Kāpiti Coast District Council has engaged in social media since 2014. We use these platforms (Facebook, Instagram and Neighbourly) to inform and engage our community on a number of Council-related topics, this includes changes or upgrades to our services and facilities, key projects, funding and grants programmes, public safety information, and opportunities for our community to have their say and participate in the democratic process.

Our community is reasonably active on social media and it is an important part of our communications channels mix. While it's difficult measure what impact social media has had on levels of engagement, our posts do generate community conversation. Our social media pages also provide a channel for our community to ask us questions and lodge requests for service.

2. Have the discussions around the community changed since becoming more accessible? More productive? Less productive?

Our community has a very active presence on social media and it has made it easier for our community to share their views on topics of interests, and for our Council to communicate with our community. While we actively monitor and moderate comments on our social media pages and measure the reach of our posts, we do not currently engage in any sentiment analysis.

3. How much of the feedback received through social media would you say has generated or influenced your decisions?

Comments shared are not presented to Council as part of formal consultation processes.

4. Would you recommend that other regional councils make the move to social media?

Yes, while engaging in social media can be resource intensive, in our opinion social media is an important part of the modern digital communications landscape. It enables us to share information - and at times correct misinformation - in a timely manner and means our community can share information with us in real time on their terms.

Ngā mihi



Janice McDougall

Group Manager People and Partnerships
Te Kaihautū, ngā Rangapū, Tāngata hoki