

From: [Jenny Lapham](#)
To: ["Hamish McNeilly"](#)
Subject: FW: Local Government Official Information request - 1309799 - Zoom Call
Date: Tuesday, 8 September 2026 04:31:00 p.m.
Attachments: [0.png](#)
[Information Redacted.pdf](#)

Kai Ora

I refer to your request below and apologise for the delay in responding to your request. Please find attached the information as requested. Some information has been redacted pursuant to section 7(2)(a) of LGOIMA to protect the privacy of a natural person and section 7(f)(i) of LGOIMA maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to members or officers or employees of any local authority in the course of their duty.

As some information has been redacted you are advised that you have the right to seek a review by the Office of the Ombudsman.

Kā mihi

[Jennifer Lapham](#)

LGOIMA Officer

Governance Group

P 03 477 4000 | **E** Jenny.Lapham@dcc.govt.nz

Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Ōtepoti - Dunedin City Council

PO Box 5045, Dunedin 9054

New Zealand

www.dunedin.govt.nz

From: webmaster@dcc.govt.nz <webmaster@dcc.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, 10 August 2026 9:20 a.m.
To: Official Information <officialinformation@dcc.govt.nz>
Subject: Local Government Official Information request - 1309799

Hamish has submitted a LGOIMA request - 1309799.

Below are the details of the request

Request details:

Jenny Lapham

From: Sophie Barker
Sent: Monday, 10 August 2026 01:44 p.m.
To: Jenny Lapham
Subject: Fw: FYI

Kā mihi nui
All the best

Sophie Barker
Mayor of Dunedin
Te Koromatua o Ōtepoti
M 021 349 843 | E mayor@dcc.govt.nz
Kaunihera a-rohe o Ōtepoti | Dunedin City Council
50 The Octagon, Dunedin
PO Box 5045, Dunedin 9054
New Zealand
www.dunedin.govt.nz

From: Sophie Barker <Sophie.Barker@dcc.govt.nz>
Sent: Thursday, August 6, 2026 8:55 AM
To: Monique Devereux <Monique.Devereux@dcc.govt.nz>
Cc: Chris Morris <Chris.Morris@dcc.govt.nz>
Subject: Re: FYI

Kia ora Monique
I won't be commenting on this.

Kā mihi
All the best
Sophie Barker
Mayor of Dunedin
Te Koromatua o Ōtepoti
M 021 349 843 | E mayor@dcc.govt.nz
Kaunihera a-rohe o Ōtepoti | Dunedin City Council
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From: Monique Devereux <Monique.Devereux@dcc.govt.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 06 August 2026 08:38:14
To: Sophie Barker <Sophie.Barker@dcc.govt.nz>
Cc: Chris Morris <Chris.Morris@dcc.govt.nz>
Subject: FYI

Morena Mayor Sophie

Just letting you know that the Today Show (Australia) is looking for you to talk about the infamous Bathroom Zoom – they have you and Ms Galer confused. I've clarified who is who and said Jo is currently traveling and can't zoom from the sky. They can ask her directly if they can reach her when she lands.

Monique Devereux
HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT
DUNEDIN CITY COUNCIL
PH: 03 477 4000
www.dunedin.govt.nz

50 The Octagon, Dunedin
PO Box 5045, Dunedin 9054
New Zealand
www.dunedin.govt.nz

From: Sophie Barker <Sophie.Barker@dcc.govt.nz>
Sent: Thursday, August 6, 2026 08:23
To: Jo Galer <galerjo@gmail.com>
Subject: Re:

Kia ora Jo

Thank you for your email.

I apologise if my speaking to you on Zoom was seen as a put down, It was absolutely not intended to be, just to let you know that you might want to move your camera angle, or blur your background. I have been caught out in the past on Zoom, as have many of us, so it was a matter of courtesy.

Not relevant

Kā mihi
All the best

Sophie Barker
Mayor of Dunedin
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From: Jo Galer <galerjo@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, 6 August 2026 05:50
To: Sophie Barker <Sophie.Barker@dcc.govt.nz>
Subject:

Hi Sophie,

Not relevant

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Not relevant

[REDACTED]

Not relevant to request

Thanks
Jo

[REDACTED]

Not relevant to request

Not relevant to request

Jenny Lapham

From: Sophie Barker
Sent: Monday, 10 August 2026 01:42 p.m.
To: Jenny Lapham
Subject: Fw:

Kā mihi nui
All the best

Sophie Barker
Mayor of Dunedin
Te Koromatua o Ōtepoti
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From: Jo Galer <galerjo@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 6, 2026 8:58 PM
To: Sophie Barker <Sophie.Barker@dcc.govt.nz>
Subject: Re:

Hi Sophie,
I appreciate your apology to me personally.

However it does not resolve the public perception that has been created from this.

Your comments drew attention to the background and made this a bigger story - I'm sure you would appreciate the impact this type of story has on family members.

Not relevant to request

Not relevant to request

FYI, I have been asked for multiple international media interviews including ABC Australia.

Thanks
Jo

On Wed, 5 Aug 2026 at 9:23 PM, Sophie Barker <Sophie.Barker@dcc.govt.nz> wrote:
Kia ora Jo

Thank you for your email.

I apologise if my speaking to you on Zoom was seen as a put down, it was absolutely not intended to be, just to let you know that you might want to move your camera angle, or blur your background. I have been caught out in the past on Zoom, as have many of us, so it was a matter of courtesy.

Not relevant

Kā mihi
All the best

Jenny Lapham

From: Sophie Barker
Sent: Monday, 10 August 2026 01:40 p.m.
To: Jenny Lapham
Subject: Fw: Housekeeping prior to the start of the council meeting

Kā mihi nui
All the best

Sophie Barker
Mayor of Dunedin
Te Koromatua o Ōtepoti
M 021 349 843 | E mayor@dcc.govt.nz
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From: Joanne Galer <jo.galer@dcc.govt.nz>
Sent: Friday, August 7, 2026 9:54 PM
To: Sophie Barker <Sophie.Barker@dcc.govt.nz>
Cc: Russell Lund <russell.lund@dcc.govt.nz>
Subject: Housekeeping prior to the start of the council meeting

Hi Sophie,
Thank you for your second apology email.

Thanks
Jo

Free and Frank

Free and Frank

Jenny Lapham

From: Sophie Barker
Sent: Monday, 10 August 2026 01:41 p.m.
To: Jenny Lapham
Subject: Fw:

Kā mihi nui
All the best

Sophie Barker
Mayor of Dunedin
Te Koromatua o Ōtepoti
M 021 349 843 | E mayor@dcc.govt.nz
Kaunihera a-rohe o Ōtepoti | Dunedin City Council
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www.dunedin.govt.nz

From: Sophie Barker <Sophie.Barker@dcc.govt.nz>
Sent: Friday, August 7, 2026 12:43 PM
To: Jo Galer <galerjo@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: Re:

Kia ora Jo

I am extremely sorry the breach of privacy for mentioning that you were attending from the other side of the world. It was an error on my part, and I apologise deeply for the impact on you and your family.

Cameras are only required to be on during confidential meetings, however it has been practice for Councillors to have them on during public meetings. I am happy to review this, it will be up to the Councillor on the day. Standing order 12.12 requires at least 2 working days notice to the Chair and CEO when wishing to attend meetings by audio or audio visual link, so we will review instructions around AV links and whether camera's on/off.

Protection of Privacy

Kā mihi
All the best

Sophie Barker
Mayor of Dunedin
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From: Jo Galer <galerjo@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, 6 August 2026 20:56
To: Sophie Barker <Sophie.Barker@dcc.govt.nz>
Subject: Re:

Hi Sophie,
I appreciate your apology to me personally.

However it does not resolve the public perception that has been created from this.

Your comments drew attention to the background and made this a bigger story - I'm sure you would appreciate the impact this type of story has on family members.

Protection of Privacy

As per the below fb comment on the ODT - it says it all:

"The Mayor stated Cr Lund & Cr Galer were overseas so improvised arrangements were probable. Part of the meeting was public excluded so they needed to control access.

That ruled out the option Cr Mayhem used last year (?), which was a hotel lobby (!).

The low resolution prevented identification of the items, and those who prioritise substance over performance, and basic courtesy, wouldn't look at them anyway. The person in the background left after apparently ascertaining what was occurring. That indicates the choice of venue was effective in ensuring uninterrupted privacy.

At best this was unremarkable, or something to gently "rib" Cr Galer about in good humour: Packets

of pegs as presents perhaps.

Protection of Privacy

FYI, I have been asked for multiple international media interviews including ABC Australia.

Thanks
Jo

On Wed, 5 Aug 2026 at 9:23 PM, Sophie Barker <Sophie.Barker@dcc.govt.nz> wrote:
Kia ora Jo

Thank you for your email.

I apologise if my speaking to you on Zoom was seen as a put down, It was absolutely not intended to be, just to let you know that you might want to move your camera angle, or blur your background. I have been caught out in the past on Zoom, as have many of us, so it was a matter of courtesy.

Free and Frank

Kā mihi
All the best

Sophie Barker
Mayor of Dunedin
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Jenny Lapham

From: Sophie Barker
Sent: Monday, 10 August 2026 01:39 p.m.
To: Jenny Lapham
Subject: Fw: Housekeeping prior to the start of the council meeting

Kā mihi nui
All the best

Sophie Barker
Mayor of Dunedin
Te Koromatua o Ōtepoti
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From: Sophie Barker <Sophie.Barker@dcc.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2026 6:12 AM
To: Joanne Galer <jo.galer@dcc.govt.nz>
Subject: Re: Housekeeping prior to the start of the council meeting

Kia ora Jo

Thank you for advising me of the circumstances around your attendance at the meeting last week.

I have sent an email to Councillors as a reminder about online meetings, the standing order rules and expectations for apologies.

You are welcome to send an email to Councillors explaining all your difficulties in attending the meeting as outlined in your email. Many are familiar with the challenges of online attendance. As already offered to you as a new councillor the Governance and IT team are available for any training which you can organise through the CEO.

I have already apologised to you by email for trying to alert you to your background and for mentioning you were on the other side of the world.

1. The email to Councillors reminds them of the process for asking for IT assistance for attending online meetings and the camera expectations for public and non-public meetings.

2. I have covered off confidentiality on absences in my email to Councillors. I was unaware that your trip away was confidential so have asked all councillors to make it clear when they write re absences to clarify their status. As yours was verbal to me when you left a meeting for your holiday.

Not relevant

Not relevant

Jenny Lapham

From: Sophie Barker
Sent: Monday, 10 August 2026 01:40 p.m.
To: Jenny Lapham
Subject: Fw: Meetings

Kā mihi nui
All the best

Sophie Barker
Mayor of Dunedin
Te Koromatua o Ōtepoti
M 021 349 843 | E mayor@dcc.govt.nz
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From: Sophie Barker <Sophie.Barker@dcc.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2026 6:11 AM
To: Council 2025-2028 (Elected Members) <council.2025-2028@dcc.govt.nz>
Subject: Meetings

Kia ora Councillors

There appears to be some confusion around meeting attendance online.

ATTENDANCE ONLINE
Standing order 12.12 states as follows

12.12

Conditions for attending by audio or audio visual link

The Chairperson may give approval for a member to attend meetings by electronic link, either generally or for a specific meeting. Examples of situations where approval can be given include:

- (a) where the member is at a place that makes their physical presence at the meeting impracticable or impossible;
- (b) where a member is unwell; and

(c) where a member is unable to attend due to an emergency.

Request to attend by audio or audio visual link

Where possible, a member will give the Chairperson and the chief executive at least 2 working days' notice when they want to attend a meeting by audio or audio visual link. Should, due to illness or emergency, this is not possible the member may give less notice. Where such a request is made and the technology is available, the chief executive must take reasonable steps to enable the member to attend by audio or audio-visual link. However, the council has no obligation to make the technology for an audio or audio-visual link available.

If the member's request cannot be accommodated, or there is a technological issue with the link, this will not invalidate any acts or proceedings of the local authority or its committees.

*Please be considerate of the Governance Support Officers and technical support who do their best to assist online attendance. Sometimes, even with best efforts, technology may fail.

CAMERAS

Note it is mandatory for Councillors to have their cameras turned on during the confidential part of the meetings. There must be no one else in the room with you, unless they are also a named attendee.

It has been custom for Councillors to turn their camera on while speaking during the public part of the meeting. However this is entirely up to the councillor attending online- *the Chair/GSO will no longer remind people if their camera is off. However we will still remind people and give them a moment if their microphone is on mute or we can't hear them.

APOLOGIES

As advised in a previous email etc meeting apologies for absence or lateness should be sent in writing to the Mayor/Chair and cc'd to the Governance Support Officer as soon as practicable. This is important for official record keeping.

CONFIDENTIAL ABSENCES

If you are absent from a meeting or attending online please make it clear in writing to the Mayor/Chair and the CEO plus any colleagues/ friends you tell that you wish the reason to remain confidential. This should help clear up any confusion in Council around what is public or private knowledge.

Kā mihi

All the best

Sophie Barker

Mayor of Dunedin

Te Koromatua o Ōtepoti

M 021 349 843 | **E** mayor@dcc.govt.nz

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Jenny Lapham

From: Joanne Galer
Sent: Wednesday, 12 August 2026 12:45 p.m.
To: Jenny Lapham
Subject: Fw: Housekeeping prior to the start of the council meeting

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Protection of Privacy

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From: Joanne Galer <jo.galer@dcc.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, August 12, 2026 6:30 AM
To: Sophie Barker <Sophie.Barker@dcc.govt.nz>
Subject: Re: Housekeeping prior to the start of the council meeting

Hi Sophie,

Protection of Privacy

So just to clarify, it is a choice as to whether we have our cameras on when online at a public meeting? Because you had publicly told Cr Lund who spoke before me that we must have them on for public meetings - hence I felt I had to keep mine on as well. Has your stance (for non-confidential/public parts of meetings) now changed?

In hindsight, I realise you and I were both effectively surprised by the fact my hotel washing was visible. So much for trying to save myself a few pounds on a laundry mat! I can see the humour - I may have giggled too, had I been in your position - and I can see there was no malice from you in reacting as you did. Although the public commentary seems to take the 'so what it's only her washing' approach. Maybe perfect, manicured or blurred backgrounds are not as authentic as the washing hanging up in the shower!!! I was pleasantly surprised at the largely supportive commentary I received for keeping calm and carrying on. When I read the comments (there were thousands of them in total), I have not laughed so much in ages!

See you shortly at ELT,

All emails to and from councillors/senior leadership team concerning the Zoom call from Cr Jo Galer at a council meeting on Monday August 3.

File attachment (file name)

No file uploaded

Name

Hamish mcneilly

Email address

hamish.mcneilly@stuff.co.nz

Mailing address

hamish.mcneilly@stuff.co.nz

Contact phone number

0274584605



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