

From: [Official Information](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Official Information](#)
Subject: Final response - LGOIMA 437213 - [REDACTED] - Closure of Waterworld Sauna
Date: Tuesday, 5 November 2024 2:44:12 pm
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.jpg](#)
[image003.jpg](#)

Kia ora,

We refer to your information request below. Hamilton City Council provides the following response.

Your request:

I am writing on behalf of concerned members of the community to formally raise the matter of the continued closure of the sauna at Waterworld, Hamilton. As the only public sauna available to residents by the local council, its unavailability since 2022 is a significant concern, particularly given the impact on public health, recreation, and community well-being.

We respectfully seek clarification and accountability regarding the following points:

1. **Reason for Prolonged Closure:** Could you outline the specific circumstances and operational or technical challenges that have led to the sauna being out of service for nearly two years?
2. **Prioritisation and Due Diligence:** Given the sauna's importance to the community, what measures were taken to prioritise its repair or replacement? If no remedial action has been taken thus far, we request the council to provide justification for this and clarify if a risk assessment or cost-benefit analysis was undertaken in accordance with its public service obligations.
3. **Compliance with Legal and Regulatory Obligations:** As a publicly managed amenity, we request confirmation as to whether the council has complied with all relevant statutory, regulatory, and contractual obligations in relation to the maintenance and operation of the sauna. Additionally, has the extended downtime given rise to any breaches of service agreements or negligence in fulfilling the council's duty of care to the community?
4. **Future Action Plan and Timeline:** We request a clear outline of the intended course of action, including specific timelines for repairs or refurbishment and any contingencies in place. In the absence of a clear repair schedule, we ask that the council provide a formal statement on whether there are plans to discontinue the sauna permanently and, if so, the reasons for such a decision.

We respectfully remind the council of its obligations under relevant local government regulations to ensure transparency, accountability, and equitable access to public services. The community has an expectation that public amenities will be maintained to a suitable standard, and we trust that the council shares this commitment. Given the length of the sauna's closure and the lack of communication thus far, we would appreciate a substantive response within 14 days of this email, outlining the council's position and the next steps. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. We look forward to receiving your response.

Our response:

1. **Reason for Prolonged Closure: Could you outline the specific circumstances and operational or technical challenges that have led to the sauna being out of service for nearly two years?**

There was a fire onsite November 2022 where both the steam room and sauna were damaged. This event was submitted to insurers who undertook an investigation, that involved Loss adjusters, and professionals to validate the claim. On assessment it was identified that the sauna needed a complete renewal and was beyond repair. Insurance was not sufficient to fund this and at that time the renewal was not planned or budgeted within the 2021-2031 long term plan budget. In June 2023 the renewal was reprioritised and included in the 2024-2034 long term plan budget.

In 2023 Council commenced investigations into a replacement option, this included due diligence into appropriate solutions and designs. These investigations also involved identifying a reputable company with the appropriate design knowledge and expertise, ability to supply equipment and provide the required maintenance support. Through this process a preferred supplier was identified and they are working with Architects to complete detailed design work. This stage of the process can take some time as there is significant time required to develop and test designs for both the building and plant elements.

2. **Prioritisation and Due Diligence: Given the sauna's importance to the community, what measures were taken to prioritise its repair or replacement? If no remedial action has been taken thus far, we request the council to provide justification for this and clarify if a risk assessment or cost-benefit analysis was undertaken in accordance with its public service obligations.**

The risk assessment and cost benefit analysis were captured in the asset management and project documentation developed by Council staff. As a result, the decision was made to prioritise the renewal and associated expenditure in year one of the 2024/2025 renewals budget.

3. **Compliance with Legal and Regulatory Obligations: As a publicly managed amenity, we request confirmation as to whether the council has complied with all relevant statutory, regulatory, and contractual obligations in relation to the maintenance and operation of the sauna. Additionally, has the extended downtime given rise to any breaches of service agreements or negligence in fulfilling the council's duty of care to the community?**

Yes, we can confirm that all the maintenance obligations were met in relation to the steam room and sauna. There are no legal obligations to have the sauna open.

4. **Future Action Plan and Timeline: We request a clear outline of the intended course of action, including specific timelines for repairs or refurbishment and any contingencies in place. In the absence of a clear repair schedule, we ask that the council provide a formal statement on whether there are plans to discontinue the sauna permanently and, if so, the reasons for such a decision.**

These facilities will not remain closed permanently. The project is currently in the design, planning and consenting stage for the renewal of both the sauna and steam room. Physical works are programmed to commence in June 2025. The estimated reopening for these services is late July 2025.

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

Ngaa mihi

Keeley Faulkner

Official Information Advisor & Legal Support Officer

Legal services

Governance & Assurance Team | Partnerships, communication & Maaori

Email: officialinformation@hcc.govt.nz



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I support flexibility at work. While it suits me to send this email now, I don't expect a response outside of your own working hours.

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Wednesday, October 30, 2024 3:54 PM

To: Water World <Water.World@hcc.govt.nz>

Cc: Paula Southgate <paula.southgate@council.hcc.govt.nz>; HCC Customer Services <info@hcc.govt.nz>; Lance Vervoort <Lance.Vervoort@hcc.govt.nz>

Subject: Inquiry Regarding Prolonged Closure of Waterworld Sauna

Dear Council Representative's,

I hope this email finds you well.

I am writing on behalf of concerned members of the community to formally raise the matter of the continued closure of the sauna at Waterworld, Hamilton. As the only public sauna available to residents by the local council, its unavailability since 2022 is a significant concern, particularly given the impact on public health, recreation, and community well-being.

We respectfully seek clarification and accountability regarding the following points:

5. **Reason for Prolonged Closure:** Could you outline the specific circumstances and operational or technical challenges that have led to the sauna being out of service for nearly two years?
6. **Prioritisation and Due Diligence:** Given the sauna's importance to the community, what measures were taken to prioritise its repair or replacement? If no remedial action has been taken thus far, we request the council to provide justification for this and clarify if a risk assessment or cost-benefit analysis was undertaken in accordance with its public service obligations.
7. **Compliance with Legal and Regulatory Obligations:** As a publicly managed amenity, we request confirmation as to whether the council has complied with all relevant statutory, regulatory, and contractual obligations in relation to the maintenance and operation of the sauna. Additionally, has the extended downtime given rise to any breaches of service agreements or negligence in fulfilling the council's duty of care to the community?
8. **Future Action Plan and Timeline:** We request a clear outline of the intended course of action, including specific timelines for repairs or refurbishment and any contingencies in place. In the absence of a clear repair schedule, we ask that the council provide a formal statement on whether there are plans to discontinue the sauna permanently and, if so, the reasons for such a decision.

We respectfully remind the council of its obligations under relevant local government regulations to ensure transparency, accountability, and equitable access to public services. The community has an expectation that public amenities will be maintained to a suitable standard, and we trust that the council shares this commitment.

Given the length of the sauna's closure and the lack of communication thus far, we would appreciate a substantive response within 14 days of this email, outlining the council's position and the next steps.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. We look forward to receiving your response.

Kind regards,

