

18 September 2026

s 9(2)(a)

## Your request

Thank you for your request to the Electricity Authority Te Mana Hiko (Authority), received on 7 August, under the Official Information Act 1982 (Act) for the following information:

*Under the Official Information Act, I request the following:*

- 1. The total amount paid by the Electricity Authority to Consumer NZ for the operation of Powerswitch for each financial year from 2019/20 until the funding arrangement ended;*
- 2. The total budget for Powerswitch each year over the same period;*
- 3. Copies of any funding agreements, contracts, contract variations or service agreements between the Electricity Authority and Consumer NZ relating to Powerswitch during that period;*
- 4. The total budgeted cost and actual cost (to date) of developing, procuring and launching Billy.*
- 5. The expected annual operating cost of Billy.*
- 6. Any business case, cost-benefit analysis or financial modelling comparing the cost of continuing to fund Powerswitch with the cost of procuring and operating Billy.*
- 7. Any reports or briefings discussing the decision not to continue funding Consumer NZ to operate Powerswitch;*
- 8. Any correspondence between the Electricity Authority and Consumer NZ regarding the decision to stop funding Powerswitch;*

## Our response to parts 6-8 of your request

On 13 August 2026, the Authority provided you with a copy of a previous response under the Act concerning the decision to develop and operate Billy. Subsequently you confirmed that this has addressed parts 6-8 of your request. We will respond to the remainder of your questions in turn.

## Our response to parts 1-5 of your request

Promoting competition in the electricity market is a statutory objective for the Authority, and promoting the benefits of comparing and switching electricity retailers is a statutory function.

With Billy, the Authority has invested in building a platform that is publicly owned, transparent and able to evolve with the electricity market over time, rather than continuing to partially fund a third-party service. This approach gives New Zealanders a long-term comparison tool that is independent of any commercial interest, data-driven and designed to support future improvements in electricity data and consumer information.

***The total amount paid by the Electricity Authority to Consumer NZ for the operation of PowerSwitch for each financial year from 2019/20 until the funding arrangement ended***

The response to part 1 of your request is set out below. We note that the financial years referred to below began on 1 July. Amounts are also exclusive of GST.

|       |                                                                                  |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 25/26 | \$ 744,062 (lower than previous years, as it was a half year contract extension) |
| 24/25 | \$1,451,828                                                                      |
| 23/24 | \$1,395,989                                                                      |
| 22/23 | \$1,200,000                                                                      |
| 21/22 | \$1,200,000                                                                      |
| 20/21 | \$1,194,101                                                                      |
| 19/20 | \$119,214                                                                        |

Note that these figures are not directly comparable with those presented for Billy below. Billy is fully-funded by levy payers through the Authority and operates independently of third-party revenue sources and receives no commission. In contrast, PowerSwitch was partially funded by levy payers through the Authority. PowerSwitch received additional funding through revenue streams from third parties and commissions.

***The total budget for PowerSwitch each year over the same period***

The Authority's budget for the PowerSwitch service is outlined below, which responds to part 2 of your request. Note that this does not relate to the full budget for delivering the PowerSwitch service, which was managed by Consumer NZ and included additional revenue and/or costs.

We note again that financial years below begin on 1 July. Amounts are exclusive of GST.

|       |                                                                                 |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 25/26 | \$744,062 (lower than previous years, as it was a half year contract extension) |
| 24/25 | \$1,451,828                                                                     |
| 23/24 | \$1,395,989                                                                     |
| 22/23 | \$1,200,000                                                                     |
| 21/22 | \$1,200,000                                                                     |
| 20/21 | \$1,200,000                                                                     |
| 19/20 | \$100,000                                                                       |

***Copies of any funding agreements, contracts, contract variations or service agreements between the Electricity Authority and Consumer NZ relating to PowerSwitch during that period***

The agreements under part 3 of your request are attached. We have listed the documents in scope below as Appendix 1, with some information withheld under sections 9(2)(a) (to protect the privacy of natural persons) and 9(2)(b)(ii) (likely to unreasonably prejudice commercial position of supplier or subject of the information) the Act.

***The total budgeted cost and actual cost (to date) of developing, procuring and launching Billy and the expected annual operating cost of Billy.***

We set out below our response to part 4 of your request.

Total budgeted cost to develop, launch, and operate Billy

The original whole-of-life cost to develop and operate the comparison and switching site over 44 months was \$6.141m, which was lifted to \$6.7 million.

The project had a minor budget overspend (3%) as the result of a small delay to launch.

Additional funding was also approved (6%) to increase data security measures in response to an increasingly complex security environment.

Overall, this reflects a 9% budget increase, in step with the increase in the initial project scope – particularly in strengthening data security and ensuring full market representation – rather than a like-for-like cost increase.

Actual cost to develop, procure, and launch Billy

The actual cost to date of developing, establishing, and launching Billy was \$2.6 million and the cost of procuring Billy was \$595,000.

The expected annual operating cost of Billy

Part 5 of your request is for the expected annual operating costs of Billy.

The operating budget is \$4.1 million to operate the comparison and switching website over the 44-month contract term. This is an average cost of \$1.1m per year, with costs being higher in the first two years as the service is launched and embedded, and lower than average in the last two years as the service matures and efficiencies from the upfront investment in a modern technology platform.

The ongoing operation of Billy is likely to involve 1.5 FTE from Authority staff. This is approximate and may change depending on the level of change in the market and support required across the organisation.

Separately, existing Authority funding has been allocated to support consumer awareness and engagement for Billy.

**Release of information related to your request**

I am satisfied, in terms of section 9(1) of the Act, that the need to withhold the information referred to above is not outweighed by other considerations that render it desirable, in the public interest, to make the information available.

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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, the Authority may proactively release a copy of this response on our website. All personal data, including your name and contact details, will be removed before publication.

If you'd like to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact us by emailing [oia@ea.govt.nz](mailto:oia@ea.govt.nz).

Nāku noa, nā,



Airihī Mahuika  
**GM Legal, Monitoring and Compliance**

## Appendix 1 – Documents within scope

| Item No | Date             | Document Type | Title                                                     | Release (withholding grounds noted where applicable)                                               |
|---------|------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1       | 30 June 2020     | Contract      | EA01 Contract - 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2023               | Released in full, with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a), and 9(2)(b)(ii) of the Act |
| 2       | 3 March 2022     | Contract      | EA02 Contract variation - March 2022                      | Released in full, with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act                  |
| 3       | 14 June 2023     | Contract      | EA03 Amendment and Restatement Agreement 2023             | Released in full, with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act                  |
| 4       | 14 June 2023     | Contract      | EA04 Contract extension - 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2025     | Released in full, with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act                  |
| 5       | 18 November 2024 | Contract      | EA05 Contract extension - 1 July 2025 to 31 December 2025 | Released in full, with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act                  |