

4 February 2026

s 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe s 9(2)(a)

Your request

Thank you for your request, received on 16 December 2025, under the Official Information Act 1982 (Act) for the following information:

1. *All internal reports, briefings, or memos (2020–2025) referencing EMF, RF, ELF, or smart meter health risks.*
2. *Records of meetings or correspondence discussing electromagnetic hypersensitivity (EHS), particularly in relation to consumer protection.*
3. *Documents guiding public communications or regulatory engagement about EMF exposure and consumer health concerns.*
4. *References to international reports or advisories (e.g. WHO, ICNIRP) considered in policy or communications.*
5. *Discussions or policy decisions related to the NZ standard NZS 2772.1:1999 and its application to smart meters.*

Our response

For sake of clarity, I have reordered your questions and will respond to each in turn.

All internal reports, briefings, or memos (2020–2025) referencing EMF, RF, ELF, or smart meter health risks.

Records of meetings or correspondence discussing electromagnetic hypersensitivity (EHS), particularly in relation to consumer protection.

Discussions or policy decisions related to the NZ standard NZS 2772.1:1999 and its application to smart meters.

These parts of your request are refused under section 18(g) of the Act, as the information requested is not held by the Electricity Authority Te Mana Hiko (Authority). As previously explained, the Authority is not a scientific body, and we do not conduct our own scientific research into the matters you have outlined.

Documents guiding public communications or regulatory engagement about EMF exposure and consumer health concerns.

References to international reports or advisories (e.g. WHO, ICNIRP) considered in policy or communications.

The Authority has identified one document in scope of these parts of your request, which is undated. This is being released to you as an excerpt, in accordance with section 16(e) of the Act, and is attached as Appendix One.

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.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, the Electricity 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 oja@ea.govt.nz.

Nāku noa, nā,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Airihi Mahuika', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Airihi Mahuika

GM Legal, Monitoring and Compliance

Common Public Queries and Responses

Background to selected common queries:

Smart meters:

[Link to Authority Info Page](#)

Smart meters (also known as Advanced Metering Infrastructure) were introduced in around 2007 and have reached around 90% of NZ homes. They provide accurate consumption information and access to time-of-use tariffs and offers from retailers, as they can be programmed to send consumption data to retailers based on time and or situation. There are two types: AMI communicating, and AMI non-communicating. Non-comm meters are electronic but are still manually read by a meter reader, as they do not send consumption information to retailers. Legacy or non-smart meters are fully mechanical and are referred to as 'legacy meters'.

Accuracy and Technology

Smart meters have generally been well received by customers; however, some are still apprehensive about having one and would prefer a non-communicating meter for several reasons. Some consumers are still on legacy meters and often write in to ask about getting a smart meter to replace their mechanical one, usually in the belief that it will be more accurate in terms of billing, or if they want to be on a time-of-use billing plan which requires a smart meter. Those who write in and advise that they are on a legacy meter often have concerns about the accuracy of the bills. It is anecdotally known that legacy meters can (but it is very rare) run slower if they are inaccurate, rather than faster. Sometimes those who have had concerns about their smart meter causing their bill to increase, may have coincidentally increased their power usage slightly, at the same time as gaining a smart meter and have linked the two together. There is no evidence that a smart meter can cause one's bill to increase noticeably unless the previous legacy meter was very inaccurate and therefore in breach and no longer certified. This would be a different remedial process entirely.

Smart meters have been rolled out in 90% of Kiwi homes, but not all. This is mainly due to limitations of current technology. In areas with poor or no cell phone reception, a smart meter is unable to communicate with a cell network or radio mesh network and is therefore unable to transmit consumption data to a retailer. For retailers that operate solely on half-hourly data from smart meters, a location where there is no cell phone range may not be serviced by a retailer. This is the main reason why some retailers will refuse to offer service to certain customers where there is no provision for communicating smart meters. In that case, a non-communicating or legacy mechanical meter will be used, and their bill will be estimated, and their meter read by a meter reader at least once per year.

Smart Meter and Health

Smart meters often come under fire from those concerned about alleged negative health effects of wireless transmitting devices. Smart meters are most like cell phones in that they use radio mesh or GPRS data signals to transmit their consumption data to a retailer. They are very low power devices and are similar to Wi-Fi routers in terms of their wireless operation. The main complaints around smart meters come from issues around electromagnetic frequency sensitivity and cancer. Another issue that may be noted is 'dirty power'. This is an American term and there have been emails into the inbox that make note of smart meters and dirty power. Very occasionally, consumers write in to argue that they have cybersecurity concerns about their consumption data as it gets sent from the meter to the retailer.

The key points to note are:

- Smart meters are not legally required nor compulsory in NZ homes.
- The type of meter you have is usually dependent on your retailer's MEP. Unfortunately, there is no way to restrict the meter type that one has, nor can the Authority dictate to an MEP or retailer to remove a smart meter from a home where one is not wanted.
- Smart meters emit the same if not less in terms of wireless data, as a cell phone. They are often located outside the home, meaning that the chance of any health issues arising from the smart meter's operation are infinitesimally small.
- Whilst it is known that radio frequency is classed by the WHO as a type 2 'probable carcinogen' the Type 2 classification denotes that this classification is based on uncertain data and potential false probable results. For reference, there are several much more probable carcinogens such as alcohol, diesel exhaust even pickled food, that fall under the 'type 1' probable carcinogen, making them more likely to cause health concerns than EMF radiation.
- The issue of sensitivity to EMF is one that has been studied at length with very few genuine conclusions having been drawn. However, there are anecdotal cases even within the industry where workers and others have experienced strange effects due to ground wires or other EMF situations. However, the issue is very patchy in terms of incidence, and is often found to be difficult to reproduce reliably in scientific trials/research.
- Some retailers have found a niche market from supplying people with legacy meters as their unique selling point. These retailers still exist but like all small retailers they are vulnerable to market pressures.
- The Authority's overarching goal is to increase competition in the industry by reducing barriers. This means there is nothing to stop a retailer from only offering legacy meters, and consumers are encouraged to find retailers that can provide them with their desired service. However, MEPs are largely driving the switch to AMI meters because the certification knowledge for making legacy meters and compliant is drying up and is transitioning to AMI.