

21 April 2021

John Finnegan

By email only: fyi-request-14967-1f873b85@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear John,

Official Information Act #20.174 - Watercare Services Limited

1. We refer to your request received on 21 March 2021 for the following information:
 - 1.1 the number of complaints received by the Commerce Commission (**Commission**) about Watercare Services Limited (**Watercare**);
 - 1.2 how many of these complaints have been substantiated; and
 - 1.3 the nature of these complaints.
2. On 30 March 2021, you advised that you are interested in complaints received within the last five years, during the period from March 2016 to March 2021.
3. We have treated this as a request for information under the Official Information Act 1982 (**OIA**).

Our Response

4. We have decided to grant your request.
5. The Commission has received 21 complaints about Watercare during the period from 21 March 2016 to 21 March 2021. The issues complained about are as follows:¹
 - 5.1 Concern about Watercare being sole provider in area - 4 complaints
 - 5.2 Concerns about Watercare's contracts - 3 complaints
 - 5.3 Concern about accuracy of water meter readings - 2 complaints
 - 5.4 Alleged overcharging - 2 complaints

¹ Please note that some complaints are about more than one issue and have been recorded against all issues complained about.

- 5.5 Concern about average price charge for water meter sharing, rather than personal consumption charge - 2 complaints
 - 5.6 Concern about alleged unwillingness on the part of Watercare to provide breakdown of costs - 2 complaints
 - 5.7 Concern about high cost of connection fees - 2 complaints
 - 5.8 Watercare alleged to have charged commercial rate instead of residential rate - 1 complaint
 - 5.9 Alleged refusal on the part of Watercare to install individual water metres for multiple properties - 1 complaint
 - 5.10 Alleged that payment agreement altered - 1 complaint
 - 5.11 Watercare alleged to have pursued invoice already paid - 1 complaint
 - 5.12 Concern about lack of liability for breach of contract by Watercare - 1 complaint
 - 5.13 Concern about significant misquoting of cost - 1 complaint
 - 5.14 Concern about wastewater usage charges in situation of accidental water leak - 1 complaint
 - 5.15 Consumer states they were asked to pay for replacement of a public pipe - 1 complaint
 - 5.16 Concern about unfair leak allowances - 1 complaint
 - 5.17 Dissatisfaction with removal of services by Watercare - 1 complaint
 - 5.18 Watercare alleged to have invoiced property owner instead of occupants - 1 complaint
 - 5.19 Concern about fixed rate charges for wastewater and prices generally - 1 complaint
 - 5.20 Alleged price increases - 1 complaint
6. All 21 complaints were designated for no further action. You can find further information about the reasons the Commission might decide not to take further action in relation to a complaint, and our other enforcement responses, in the Enforcement Response Guidelines on our website.²

² https://comcom.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0030/62589/Enforcement-Response-Guidelines-October-2013.pdf

7. Please note the Commission will be publishing this response to your request in the Official Information Act register on our website.³ Your personal details will be redacted from the published response.
8. Please do not hesitate to contact us at uia@comcom.govt.nz if you have any questions about this request.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Sheppard
OIA Coordinator

³ <https://comcom.govt.nz/about-us/requesting-official-information/oia-register>