

From: Rainey, Sean

Sent: Monday, 1 November 2021 1:34 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: [Ticket: 470007] - LGOIMA Response - Glyphosate Use at Council

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your request from 23 September 2021:

1. *How much glyphosate it has used last year and so far this year? And, where, when and why it was used?*
2. *How much glyphosate had been used in previous years? Perhaps the last 3 years or so?*
3. *Why is there no quota on how much glyphosate can be used? Is there any discussion on whether there may be limit on its use in future? If so, what is being discussed?*

Council Response

Several Council Units are responsible for weed control. These answers have been provided as follows:

Transport

Urban Areas

1. How much glyphosate it has used last year and so far this year? And, where, when and why it was used?

The amount used is dependent on seasonal growth demands. Road landscape total glyphosate usage for the period Jan 2020 to Dec 2020 =760 LTRS, Jan 2021 to Sept 2021 (info to date) =566 LTRS

We use a range of methods for treating and controlling weeds on our transport network. This includes the use of glyphosate, which is used sparingly and only when necessary. Where possible, we use manual methods of weed control. However, glyphosate remains the most cost-effective herbicide for controlling weeds on pavements and other hard surfaces.

Where we use Glyphosate within the legal road;

- Median islands, including grass and hard surface
- Centre islands
- Kerb edge
- Centre lane
- Splitter island
- Back of Kerb
- Roundabouts
- Gardens where it is not practicable to use alternatives
- Hillside bank vegetation

Using Glyphosate;

- Decreases risk to our maintenance crews onsite
- Decreases time onsite with application
- Decrease in cost.

- Decrease in frequency,
- Minimises Health and Safety risks.
- Decrease in disruption to transport
- Glyphosate penetrates down to the root system where alternatives desiccates the top of the weed only.

Using other alternatives e.g. Steam, Fatty Acids (alternative Herbicides) reduces effectiveness

This amount is used to maintain approx. 193,344 m² of garden and green space and 1,162,640 linear metres of hard surface per month for footpath/legal road weed control. Where possible there is a continuing mulch program on garden assets to help minimise chemical usage.

1. How much glyphosate had been used in previous years? Perhaps the last 3 years or so?

We have incomplete data for previous years. However in 2019 we reported that reduction in the area that Glyphosate was used:

- Prior to the Council decision, our Transport Unit used glyphosate on 347,000m² of amenity gardens and on 3,230,000m of pavement weeds per year.
- Following the decision, the Transport Unit uses glyphosate on 122,695m² of amenity gardens and on 2,615,454m of pavement weeds.
- The Transport Unit uses thermal weeding (steam) as an alternative to chemical spray on pavement weeds and undertakes 615,379m of weed killing. Contractors hand weed 224,063m² of amenity gardens.

Banks Peninsula

The Banks Peninsula Road Maintenance contractor used approximately 1,000 litres in 2020 and has used 800L so far this year.

Glyphosate is used in and around roadside street furniture such as sign posts, guardrails, marker posts, culvert head walls and water channels (Not waterways) and is employed when required during the growing season.

It is used to limit vegetation growth in and around infrastructure. Alternative methods of control are ineffective. Manual removal of vegetation around marker pegs and street furniture is not cost effective and also puts staff in harm's way (next to traffic). Organic herbicides, such as fatty acids, have proved ineffective in the rural environment.

We are unable to provide earlier data on the use of glyphosate. Prior to 2021 glyphosate use on Banks Peninsula was not delineated from use across the city.

Facilities

No glyphosate used by contractor.

Parks

Glyphosate usage has increased due to several factors. The increase of glyphosate application in Community Parks can be attributed to newly acquired Utility Reserves which contained pest plant species, and a one off application in selected cemeteries for the control of pest weed species where fatty acid is not able to be used as it can degrade heritage headstones. Regional Parks has wetland areas that are best treated with glyphosate. Within the Residential Red Zone, contract conditions novated over from LINZ, once the contract finished, there was a reduction in usage.

Glyphosate is used when there are no other suitable alternatives and above shows the different areas within Parks and the years of usage.

CCC Glyphosate Use (litres used per annum)	FY 13/14	FY 14/15	FY 15/16	FY 16/17	FY 17/18	FY 18/19	FY 19/20	FY 20/21
Parks (Community sports and rec parks)			254	23	20.7	18	20.61	81.5
Parks (Botanic Gardens and Mona Vale)	32	32	32	0	0	0	5	0
Parks (Regional)	372	177	104	19	44	43	69	72.7
Residential Red Zone	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	244

Three Waters (figures previously provided)

Council's waterways maintenance contractor has used the volumes of glyphosate as per below:

FY 13/14	402.99L
FY 14/15	384.59L
FY 15/16	544.92L
FY 16/17	238.00L
FY 17/18	395.20L
FY 18/19	402.10L
FY 19/20	240L
FY 20/21	150L
FY 21/22	32L

Glyphosate is approved for use by the EPA which is responsible for assessing the safety of chemicals. In downstream receiving waters like the Avon River it quickly binds to sediments and becomes inactive, or is diluted to many orders of magnitude below levels which has been assessed as potentially harmful, and then breaks down naturally through microbial activity.

Alternative options have been considered and/or trialled and have proven to be either particularly toxic to aquatic life or ineffective at killing yellow flag iris in a waterway environment. As such glyphosate is the safest and most effective herbicide for use around waterways.

Glyphosate is only used by our contractor to kill targeted weed species in public areas. The vast majority of our work is manual or mechanical including hand pulling weeds, hand-hoeing and mechanical cutting of aquatic weed, and using weed-eaters to cut grass on the banks of waterways. We specifically target the yellow flag iris on the Avon River banks but will also use glyphosate to kill weeds where there is no other effective manual or mechanical method.

Council use of Glyphosate

The Council set the direction of the use of glyphosate use in March 2016:

https://christchurch.infocouncil.biz/Open/2016/03/CNCL_20160310_AGN_468_AT_SUP_WEB.htm

On 10 March the Council resolved:

1. Should it wish to consider an alternative methodology for open space management than the current -

- a. Adopt Option 2, significant reduction to glyphosate use, limited to sites closed to public, e.g. to facilitate capital works programmes, and to control pest plants where no other method is practicable, and to utilise a combination of Fatty Acid herbicides and physical techniques, as the preferred option; and
 - b. Increase the capital and maintenance budgets of the respective operations units as detailed within this report.
2. Consult with the public via the Draft Annual Plan Consultation Process on its proposal and the other options, including the proposed change to the maintenance and capital budgets required.
 3. Request staff continue investigations into alternative methodologies for open space management and report back to Council within two years.
 4. That the Council write to Land Information New Zealand, informing them of its decision over the use of glyphosate in its parks and reserves, urging them to review the use of glyphosate in the residential red zone and offering Council staff to work with them.
 5. Request staff to ensure that Health and Safety regulations are complied with by all staff and contractors undertaking open space management.

Subsequent to this the following was adopted as part of the 2020/21 Annual Plan:

Glyphosate Use

2.4.2 That the Council:

- a. Notes that of the submitters who provided an opinion on the reintroduction of glyphosate a majority (66%) oppose the proposal.
- b. Resolves to continue the current policy of reduced use of glyphosate in public spaces and not incorporate the \$3.2m savings (net of NZTA subsidies) from the increased use consulted on in the updated draft annual plan.

*The division was declared **carried** by 10 votes to 5 votes the voting being as follows:*

For: *Acting Mayor Turner, Councillor Chen, Councillor Coker, Councillor Cotter, Councillor Daniels, Councillor Davidson, Councillor Galloway, Councillor Johanson, Councillor McLellan and Councillor Templeton*

Against: *Councillor Chu, Councillor Gough, Councillor Keown, Councillor MacDonald and Councillor Mauger*

Abstained: *Councillor Scandrett*

Councillor Davidson/Councillor Cotter

Carried

The meeting adjourned at 11.15am and reconvened at 11.33am.

You have the right to request the Ombudsman to review this decision. Complaints can be sent by email to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz, by fax to (04) 471 2254, or by post to The Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Kind regards,

Sean

Sean Rainey

Manager Official Information and Privacy Officer

Official Information Team



[Redacted phone number]



[Redacted email address]



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