



19-E-0368 / DOC 6025433

31 July 2019

Hannah Enderby
via fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Enderby

We refer to your Official Information Act request to the Department of Conservation dated 5 June 2019, relating to the 2011 Okarito pest control operation.

We previously responded to a part of that request, and sought an extension to the remainder of that request, in our letter to you dated 3 July 2019. This letter is intended to provide you with an update on some of the points that were explained in our 3 July letter, and to provide a response to the part of your request that was previously extended.

Photos of kea

In your request, you asked that we provide copies of the photos of kea that died as a result of the 2011 Okarito operation, including photos of any necropsies that were carried out on those kea.

In our 3 July letter, we informed you that that information will soon be publicly available on the Department's website. We have been taking the necessary steps to publish this information on the Department's website and anticipate that this information will be available to you soon.

For the avoidance of doubt, we note that none of the photos that fall within the scope of your request capture the necropsies that were performed on these kea. The department does not hold any such photos and nor are we aware of any having been taken in relation to the kea killed during the 2011 Okarito operation.

We will be in touch to let you know how you can view the photos that do fall within the scope of your request once they are published on the Department's website.

The 2011 Okarito operation

You requested that we provide the names of the contractor and air operator that carried out the 2011 Okarito operation. You also requested that we provide the name of the staff member that *“signed off and approved the spreading of this poisoned food to the kea”*.

There were two parts to the 2011 Okarito operation – one delivered by the Department of Conservation (“the DOC component”) and the other delivered by the Animal Health Board (“the AHB component”).

The DOC component was carried out for the purposes of controlling possum and ship rat numbers in an effort to protect rowi chicks that inhabited that area. This part of the operation was carried out by Department personnel alongside staff from Vector Control Services (which is a business unit of the West Coast Regional Council).

The AHB component of the operation aimed to reduce the spread of bovine tuberculosis (TB) in possums by controlling possum numbers. The AHB component was delivered by Vector Control Services on behalf of the Animal Health Board.

I have decided to withhold the names of the Department's staff members and VCS employees, under sections 9(2)(a) and 9(2)(g) of the Official Information Act 1982 (to protect the privacy of natural persons and prevent any improper pressure or harassment of officials or employees). In making this decision, I have taken into account the public interest considerations set out in section 9(1) of the Official Information Act.

The DOC component and the AHB component were both approved and signed off by Mike Slater, Conservator, of the Department of Conservation. I note that these approvals were not granted for "the spreading of poisoned food to kea" as you have claimed, but for the application of 1080 for the purposes of protecting rowi chicks and reducing the spread of bovine TB by controlling possum and ship rat numbers.

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amber Bill', written in a cursive style.

Amber Bill
Director Threats
For Director-General