



9 October 2019

Alex Harris  
fyi-request-11194-0159b168@requests.fyi.org.nz

Reference: OIA-2019/20-0142

Dear Alex Harris

**Official Information Act request relating to the Officials' Committee for Domestic and External Security Coordination and Climate Change**

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 11 September 2019. You requested:

*"Climate change is widely considered to be a risk to national and international security, and many of its effects - floods, droughts, international instability - fall squarely within ODESC's ambit. I'm wondering therefore whether ODESC has, or has had in the past, a watch group dedicated to climate change, and if so, how many times and on what dates it (or they) has (or have) met.*

*I would prefer to receive an electronic response. Queries about this request will be automatically forwarded to me by the fyi.org.nz website."*

I advise that no Watch Groups have been established for climate change. Accordingly, I am declining your request under section 18(e) of the Act, as the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist.

However, it is also important to note that Watch Groups are only one aspect of the national security architecture to identify and mitigate national security risks, and the trends impacting on these, such as climate change.

The identification and governance of national security risk are managed within the National Security System by two multi-agency governance boards: the Security and Intelligence Board and the Hazard Risk Board. In recognition of climate change's influence on national security risks, particularly those governed by Hazard Risk Board, the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) was invited to join Hazard Risk Board last year.

As part of the recognition of the need to join up across agencies, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet also convened a National Security Discussion Forum on 15 May 2018 on the links between climate change and its potential national security risks. These forums are a vehicle to build networks and encouraging risk-based discussion and information sharing across the breadth of the national security system. This particular forum was attended by around 40 officials from a range of agencies.

Complementary to any work undertaken by the governance boards, MfE has developed a framework, which is the first step in the development of the National Climate Change Risk Assessment (NCCRA). The next step is to use the framework to carry out New Zealand's first NCCRA. Provided below is the link to MfE's website on the NCCRA.

<https://www.mfe.govt.nz/climate-change/assessing-climate-change-risk>

For further information on climate change including the NCCRA I would encourage you to visit MfE's website or contact MfE [info@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:info@mfe.govt.nz).

In the context of the development of the framework for the NCCRA, the Hazard Risk Board considered climate change at its meetings in June 2018 and October 2018. In October 2018 the Hazard Risk Board agreed to delay further work on climate change until the NCCRA had been completed.

In August 2019, as part of its priority-setting exercise for the coming period, the Hazard Risk Board agreed that it would maintain a watching brief on climate change and its exacerbating effect on natural hazards.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

We do not intend to publish this response on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's website.

Yours sincerely



Tony Lynch  
**Deputy Chief Executive**  
**National Security Group**