



OIA16-0479

31 AUG 2016

Graham Carter
c/- fyi.org.nz

Dear Graham Carter

OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

I refer to your official information request on 22 August 2016 relating to foreign charter vessels carrying whale knives. You asked:

1. *Why do Foreign Charter Vessels (FCV) come to New Zealand waters with whale knives on board?*
2. *What checks does the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) do on FCV's to ascertain if and why they carry these knives?*


The term 'whale knives' has been interpreted as referring to flensing knives, a tool used to remove blubber from whale carcasses. FCVs are no longer permitted to be registered to fish in New Zealand waters, so your reference to FCVs has been interpreted as referring to foreign-owned New Zealand fishing vessels.

In response to each of your questions:

1. MPI has no information suggesting that vessels come into New Zealand waters with flensing knives on board. This request is therefore refused under section 18(g) of the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) as the information requested is not held by MPI and it has no grounds for believing that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown, or by a local authority. We would, however, welcome any information you may have that such instruments are on board any vessel in New Zealand's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the activities in which you believe they are being used.
2. Given that MPI has no information to suggest flensing knives are an issue within New Zealand's EEZ, there is no current basis to conduct any checks. Again, any information you may be able to provide regarding this issue would be helpful.

You have the right under section 28(3) of the OIA to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of our decision to refuse parts of your request.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right and then loops back down towards the text below.

Peter McCarthy
Chief Legal Adviser