



Reference: OIA-2017/18-0256

25 January 2018

Alex Harris
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Dear Alex Harris

Official Information Act request relating to the Officials' Committee for Domestic and External Security Coordination (ODESC) Watch Groups and meetings

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 7 December 2017. You requested:

- *"A list of all Watch Groups active in 2016-2017, along with the topic they address;*
- *The dates and topics discussed at all ODESC meetings in 2016-17."*

As you noted in your request, some of the information you have requested was included in the Briefing for the Incoming Minister (BIM) for National Security and Intelligence released last month. This briefing stated that *"In 2016-2017, there were 51 Watch Groups and 25 ODESC meetings, on a number of different topics, including the Kaikoura earthquake, Myrtle Rust, cyber threats, counter-terrorism, major events security, severe weather, aviation security and the contamination of Havelock North's water supply."* The list of topics given here was extensive and covered most of the topics addressed by ODESC meetings.

The full list of information you have requested is given below.

ODESC Watch Groups active in 2016-2017 together with the topic they addressed

- Contamination of Havelock North's water supply: Watch Groups met 5 times.
- Kaikoura earthquake: Watch Groups met 9 times.
- Aviation security: Watch Groups met 3 times.
- Severe weather (the April 2017 event): Watch Groups met 3 times.
- Myrtle rust: Watch Groups met 3 times.
- Various cyber threats: Watch Groups met 8 times.
- Major events security (Gallipoli commemorations; major events in NZ): Watch Groups met twice.
- Preparations for first test launch by Rocket Lab: Watch Groups met twice.
- Other national security issues: Watch Groups met 16 times. [Details of the topics discussed withheld under section 6(a).]

Dates and topics discussed at all ODESC meetings in 2016-17

- Contamination of Havelock North's water supply: ODESC met on 18 August 2016.
- Kaikoura earthquake: ODESC met 11 times between 14 November and 7 December 2016. The dates of these meetings were:

- 14 November 2016 (3 meetings)
 - 15 November 2016 (2 meetings)
 - 16 November 2016
 - 18 November 2016
 - 21 November 2016
 - 24 November 2016
 - 30 November 2016
 - 7 December 2016.
- Severe weather (April 2017 event): ODESC met on 12 April 2017.
 - Myrtle rust: ODESC met on 16 May and 8 June 2017.
 - Cyber threats: ODESC met 5 times. The specific dates of these meetings have been withheld under the following sections of the Official Information Act 1982:
 - Section 6(a) as the making available of that information would be likely “to prejudice the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand”.
 - Section 6(b)(i) as the making available of that information would be likely “to prejudice the entrusting of information to the Government of New Zealand on a basis of confidence by- the Government of any other country or any agency of such a Government.
 - Major events security (Gallipoli commemoration): ODESC met on 31 March 2017.
 - Other national security issues: ODESC met 4 times. Details about the topics discussed and the dates of the meetings withheld under sections 6(a) and 6(b)(i) of the Official Information Act 1982.

You will note that, although “counter-terrorism” was listed as one of the topics considered by ODESC in the briefing to the incoming Minister, it has not been listed above under a specific ODESC meeting or Watch Group. The risk of terrorism arose as a subject several times, for instance it was considered during the discussions about major events security and Rocket Lab launch preparations, and also formed part of the “other national security issues” considerations.

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You are entitled to ask the Ombudsman to review this response under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act. You can contact the Ombudsman online via the Ombudsman website, by email (info@ombudsman.parliament.nz) or by post to The Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143. Further details can be found on the Ombudsman website at: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Yours sincerely



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