



Headquarters  
New Zealand Defence Force  
Defence House  
Private Bag 39997  
Wellington Mail Centre  
Lower Hutt 5045  
New Zealand

OIA-2024-4901

23 January 2024

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 4 December 2023 requesting the following information:

*...can you say how many Skydio X2D, FLIR R70 SkyRanger, Defendtex D40 and AeroVironment Puma have been acquired (by lease or purchase) and when and which units are trialling them?*

*You mentioned these are used for experimentation, and in your initial response about the RNZN's Skydio S2+ you said that individual units have the flexibility to do make purchases, so were all these drone purchases completed on this basis? Or is there some central NZDF management of this process?*

*I was just wondering how they are able to access the funds, is there a special route to apply for this, or units are already given funds for minor purchases that they can access when they like? Does this mean the units manage the run the whole thing themselves, does the RNZN have an organisation to do it, or is there support from MoD?*

*For example, which unit in the navy was able to purchase the Skydio S2+ that was trialled on Taupo? Was it the crew of Taupo that wanted to see what it offered, or a RNZN UAS organisation that is running this? Would this be the same in Army and RNZAF?*

Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). I apologise for the delay in providing this response.

Drones, also referred to as Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems or Uncrewed Aircraft (or Aerial) Systems, are primarily used for training purposes and to collect images. Images can help in the management of the Defence Estate and Air Force Bases, for example. New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) drones have also been used to support other agencies when requested, such as firefighting and search and rescue. The drones are also used for experimentation to inform future capability requirements. Publicly available information on drone numbers and use by units is available through various means (including, but not limited to, the NZDF website, Service magazines, and the Ministry of Defence website). Further detail is withheld in accordance with section 6(a) of the OIA.

The NZDF has been developing its drone policies and processes since late 2014, and the use of drones within the NZDF is now a "business as usual" approach. Depending on the purpose

for which drones may be obtained by the NZDF, there are various processes by which they may be purchased or procured. In some instances this will be managed by Integrated Project Teams (joint NZDF and Ministry of Defence projects), or through the NZDF Procurement Assurance Board, or authorised by command and purchased through existing operational budgets.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website, with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely

**AJ WOODS**

Air Commodore

Chief of Staff HQNZDF