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

OIA-2025-5259

28 February 2025

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 3 February 2025 requesting *all information and advice produced by Defence Science and Technology concerning the Tui and Korimako payloads*. Your request has been considered in accordance with the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

There are more than 2,850 files of information produced by Defence Science and Technology (DST) regarding the respective payloads. A substantial collation effort would be required to review all information and prepare it for release. Consulting you to refine this part of your request, fixing a charge, or extending the timeframe for a decision, were all considered; however, a considerable amount of information would also be included even if this part of the request was limited to a particular subject or type of information. Therefore your request for *all information... produced by Defence Science and Technology concerning the Tui and Korimako payloads* is refused in accordance with section 18(f) of the OIA.

With respect to advice produced by DST, the following excerpts are from Defence Weekly Reports to the Minister of Defence:

Defence Weekly Report (8-14 February 2024)

Defence Science & Technology has an active research programme into space operations that is deeply engaged with our Five Eyes partners. Our research aims to build practical experience in space science and technology, test processes for New Zealand government space operations, and generate knowledge to enable future NZDF and wider government space development.

The first experimentation mission will launch the "Korimako" payload no earlier than 20 March. This mission aims to confirm concepts and to refine processes. The second experimentation mission, "Tui", is anticipated for launch in October and will conduct communications research. Both missions will be controlled from the NZDF's ground station at Whangaparaoa and through our Five Eyes partner network of ground stations.

These experimental missions will generate NZDF knowledge to drive future military space operations, mature the space ecosystem in New Zealand through informing legislation and regulation, and advance partner space research by contributing the Whangaparaoa Ground Station to the Five Eyes experimental network.

Defence Weekly Report (16-22 January 2025)

Successful launch of a second NZDF satellite payload - 15 January

A second NZDF payload, hosted on a United States research satellite, has been successfully launched into orbit. The Tui payload, named after the native bird, was built by a team of scientists from the NZDF's Defence Science and Technology organisation. It was launched on a SpaceX

Falcon 9 from Vandenberg Space Force Base in Santa Barbara, California, in the Western United States.

Tui is the primary payload on the Otter mission, a research satellite developed by the US Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) for the National Reconnaissance Office. Tui is the NZDF's second orbital research payload and represents another important milestone for both the NZDF and the wider New Zealand space enterprise.

The NZDF's first orbital research payload, Korimako, successfully launched in March 2024, also hosted on an NPS satellite. The Tui payload launch demonstrates a continuation of the NZDF's pathway into space operations research and development that began with the Korimako payload.

The purpose of the Tui experimental payload is to test communication pathways that will help reduce communications delays in space operations. The payload will generate data over a two-year period.

Through this ongoing research venture, the NZDF, in collaboration with its international partners, is continuing to lay the groundwork for future space operations and will generate knowledge to enable future NZDF and wider government space enterprise development.

Regarding the payload launches, the following information was emailed by DST to senior New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) personnel, and Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment staff on 14 January 2025. Where indicated by (...), information is withheld in accordance with sections 6(a) and 6(b)(i) of the OIA where its release would unreasonably prejudice the international relations of the Government of New Zealand and the information was provided on a basis of confidence by our international partners respectively.

Defence Science & Technology (DST) is a partner within a FVEY's programme (...) that has been exploring a federated approach to space capability. (...)

As part of this programme DST/ NZDF successfully launched its **first** sovereign payload (Korimako) into orbit earlier in 2024. The Korimako payload was integrated into the US satellite (MOLA). (...) The launch was successful and on-orbit testing between the US and NZ is currently underway. (...)

A **second** DST/NZDF payload (Tui) is planned to launch **tomorrow morning, 15 January 7:49 am**. Tui is integrated into the US satellite (OTTER). (...) The Otter satellite and Tui payload will advance the FVEY programme further (...)

Enclosed are copies of the media releases that were produced from information provided by DST.

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 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

GA Motley
Brigadier
Chief of Staff HQNZDF

Enclosure:

1. NZDF press releases



Media Release
www.nzdf.mil.nz

28 March 2024

NZDF TESTS SPACE HARDWARE AFTER SUCCESSFUL SATELLITE LAUNCH

The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) has successfully launched an experimental satellite payload into orbit on a United States satellite, which will allow defence scientists to conduct space communications research.

The “Korimako” payload was attached to a research satellite developed by the US Naval Postgraduate School, which was launched on a Rocket Lab Electron rocket mission from Wallops Flight Facility, Virginia, in the eastern United States last Thursday evening (21 March) NZT.

A team of scientists from the NZDF’s Defence Science & Technology (DST) will monitor and interact with Korimako via our Whangaparaoa Ground Station, north of Auckland. Initial tests indicate that Korimako survived the launch and is operating as expected.

“This is the first time the NZDF has had a payload put into space and represents an exciting milestone for both the NZDF and the wider New Zealand space enterprise,” said DST Director David Galligan.

Whilst Korimako is not an operational platform, it will provide the NZDF with practical experience and is developing local expertise in space science and technology, and conducting space operations.

“Our research aims to build practical experience in space science and technology, test processes for New Zealand Government space operations, and generate knowledge to enable future NZDF and wider government space development,” Dr Galligan said.

“The launch of this payload is significant for the NZDF and was made possible with the support of our international partners.”

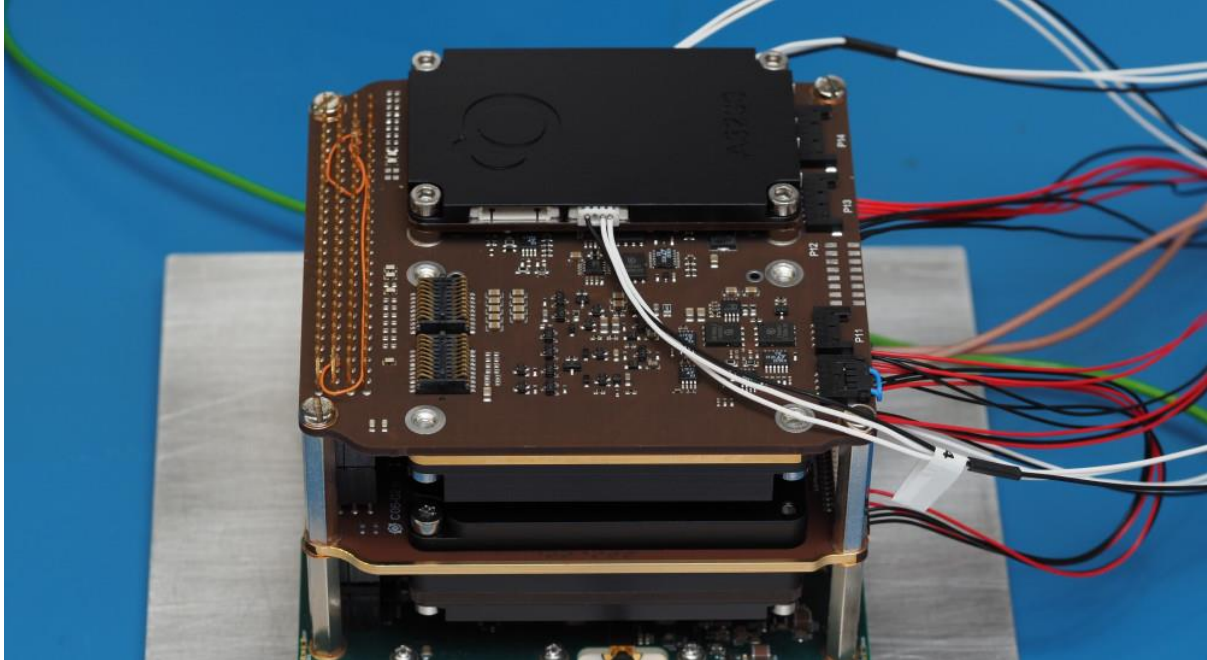
The US satellite hosting the Korimako payload is about the size of a briefcase and is orbiting the earth every 90 minutes about 515 km above the ground, which means it cannot be seen with the naked eye.

This is the first of two experimental payloads which are named after NZ native birds. The name was chosen because its beacon signal was likened to the distinctive call of the Korimako.

A second experimental payload, Tui, is planned for launch from the US later this year.

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PHOTO CAPTION: The NZDF payload Korimako in the laboratory before its launch



into space

Photos of last week's Rocket Lab launch can be found here:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/rocketlab/>

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021 487 980 or media@nzdf.mil.nz



Media Release
www.nzdf.mil.nz

24 January 2025

NZDF celebrates successful launch of a second satellite payload

A second New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) payload, hosted on a United States research satellite, has been successfully launched into orbit aboard a SpaceX Falcon-9 rocket.

The Tui payload, named after the native bird, was built by a team of scientists from the NZDF's Defence Science and Technology (DST).

It was launched on a Space X Falcon 9 from Vandenberg Space Force Base in Santa Barbara, California, in the Western United States on Wednesday 15 January (NZ time).

Tui is the primary payload on the Otter mission, a research satellite developed by the US Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) for the National Reconnaissance Office.

Tui is the NZDF's second on-orbit research payload and represents another important milestone for both the NZDF and the wider New Zealand space enterprise.

The NZDF's first orbital research payload, Korimako, successfully launched in March 2024, again hosted on an NPS satellite.

"The Tui payload launch demonstrates a continuation of DST's pathway into space operations research and development that began with the Korimako payload," said DST Director David Galligan.

"We are delighted to be enabled in these endeavours through our strong international partnerships."

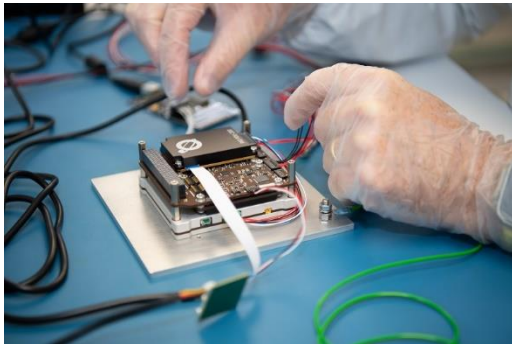
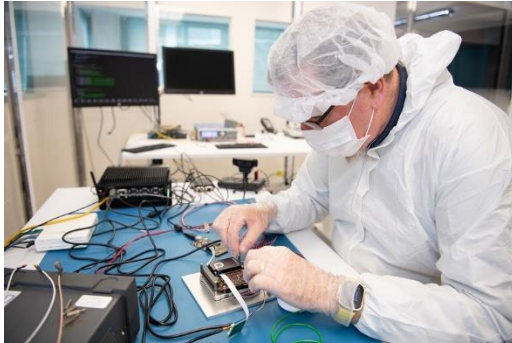
The purpose of the experimental payload is to test communication pathways that will help reduce communications delays in space operations.

The NZDF payload will generate data over a two-year period and will be used to inform NZ defence space policy considerations and potential future research work.

Through this ongoing research venture, the NZDF, in collaboration with its international partners, is continuing to lay the groundwork for future space operations and will generate knowledge to enable future NZDF and wider government space development.

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PHOTO CAPTIONS: The NZDF's Tui payload, developed by Defence Science and Technology Scientists, will test communication pathways that will help reduce communications delays in space operations.



Editors: More information on the Falcon-9 Transporter 12 launch is available at the Space X website www.spacex.com

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