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OIA-2025-5280

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March 2025

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[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your emails of 10 and 24 February 2025 to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, requesting information about a Royal New Zealand Navy (RNZN) ship. Your requests were transferred to the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) for response in accordance with the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

1. *Looking to under what Ice Navigation Experience you had onboard HMNZ Tanker that just delivered the Fuel to Ross Island*
2. *What Pollution insurance you had in place for the delivery to take place with this amount of FUEL onboard!*

HMNZS Aotearoa is the RNZN's Polar Class sustainment vessel built by Hyundai Heavy Industries. The ship features a winterisation system with upper deck trace heating, an ice-strengthened hull, and underwater fittings. These features adhere to the International Code of Safety for Ships Operating in Polar waters (Polar Code) safety regulations. The hull is ice-strengthened to Polar Class level 6, for Southern Ocean monitoring and Antarctic operations including the resupply of McMurdo Station and Scott Base.

Recently, HMNZS Aotearoa conducted a resupply of 3,800,000 litres of JP-5 low sulphur fuel in Antarctica for use at McMurdo Station and Scott Base. To ensure the safe navigation of the ship in a polar environment, the Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, Operations Officer, Navigating Officer, and all watchkeepers undertook both the basic and advanced training for Ships Operating in Polar Waters Course.

The New Zealand Maritime School, through the Manukau Institute of Technology, delivered the courses. As well as providing basic and advanced training for sailing in polar waters, the courses are designed to address provisions as necessary beyond existing requirements of international marine conventions. These include the IMO (International Maritime Organization), SOLAS (Safety of Life At Sea), and the MARPOL (prevention of pollution of the marine environment by ships) conventions.

The courses also cover the climatic conditions of polar waters, and meeting the standards of maritime safety and pollution prevention. With all navigational officers having completed

the Advanced Polar Waters course, this goes beyond the regulatory requirements for operating in polar waters. Under Regulation V/4 of the Seafarers' Training Certification and Watchkeeping code, Masters, Chief Mates and Officers in charge of a navigational watch on ships operating in polar waters shall hold a certificate in basic training for ships operating in polar waters, as required by the Polar Code.

Furthermore, HMNZS Aotearoa embarked an Ice Pilot with 32 years' ice navigation experience for the duration of the operation. The ship also embarked a meteorologist providing the Commanding Officer and Ice Pilot with real-time meteorological analysis.

Regarding insurance, the NZDF carries protection and indemnity insurance, which insures against legal liabilities arising from its ships. This cover includes pollution liabilities.

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