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OIA-2025-5324

2 April 2025

Steve Morse

fyi-request-30533-685abb0a@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Steve Morse

I refer to your email of 26 March 2025 requesting, information on New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) social media policies, and social media engagement on the sinking of HMNZS Manawanui. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), and a response to the various parts of your request is set out below.

I understand that the official accounts of the NZDF and NZ Navy have banned/blocked a number of New Zealanders from commenting on NZDF and Navy social articles on Facebook and Twitter ('X.com'), over criticism of the Navy's scuttling of HMNZS Manawanui and poisoning of Samoa's fisheries.

- 1) *Does the NZDF or Navy have policies or guidelines around what purpose officially run social media accounts serve? If so, please provide the text of said policies.*

The use of official NZDF social media channels is informed by the NZDF Public Affairs Strategy and governed by Defence Force Instruction 7.2. Both documents are publicly available on the NZDF website^{1 2}. This part of your request is therefore declined in accordance with section 18(d) of the OIA.

- 2) *Does the NZDF or Navy have policies or guidelines around under what situations those offering criticism of, for example, Capt Gray's choice to poison the waters of Tafitoala, would be banned or blocked from engaging in public discourse around NZDF & Navy actions? If so, please provide the text of said policies.*

The NZDF does not have specific policies or guidelines to manage social media engagement on the HMNZS Manawanui sinking. All engagement is managed in accordance with the NZDF social media community guidelines, which are published on the NZDF website³. If these guidelines have been breached, the team that manages the social media channels will remove the comment or block the account.

- 3) *How many accounts have been banned or blocked from NZDF and Army/Navy/Air Force social media accounts, tabulated by social media site and organization?*

¹ <https://www.nzdf.mil.nz/assets/Uploads/DocumentLibrary/NZDF-Public-Affairs-Strategy-2022.pdf>

² https://www.nzdf.mil.nz/assets/Uploads/DocumentLibrary/dfi_7_2.pdf

³ <https://www.nzdf.mil.nz/nzdf/social-media-hub/#:~:text=Be%20Kind%20and%20Courteous,inappropriate%20in%20a%20public%20forum.>

The number of users blocked on actively managed NZDF social media channels, as at 26 March 2025, is provided in the table below. Note, the NZDF retains Service profiles across all listed platforms, but does not actively use or manage Service channels other than Facebook.

	Facebook	Instagram	X	YouTube	LinkedIn	BlueSky
New Zealand Defence Force	226	107	52	40	0	0
Royal New Zealand Navy	219					
New Zealand Army	351					
Royal New Zealand Air Force	173					

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.

Yours sincerely

GA Motley

Brigadier

Chief of Staff HQNZDF