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OIA-2025-5399.1

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Dear 

I refer to your email of 14 July 2025 and your email of 16 July 2025 with follow up questions regarding the response to you of 11 July 2025 (OIA-2025-5399). These have been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). I apologise for the length of time it has taken to provide this response. This was primarily a result of staff availability to review the information held in the pro\_4191 file and compare it with the information collated for OIA-2025-5399.

*In summary, it seems to me that following Cyclone Gabrielle Starlink was identified as potentially useful for certain NZDF procedures (especially HADR). Early this year, in February, work began to procure Starlink for certain uses. One NZ was identified as the only viable supplier of Starlink for military use and a special procurement request was begun (under \$100k) for the service. It was intended for unclassified information. Sign offs and back and forth occurred throughout Feb and March and cumulated in the service being procured in the form of a 50gb Business plan. The Bluebottle crafts were mentioned in this OIA as one use of the technology.*

*For my questions:*

1. *First, is the above correct?*

The above-mentioned statement is correct. Starlink has only ever been used by the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) for unclassified data. There are other options for the supply of Starlink, and other proliferated low Earth orbit satellite systems. To expedite use of Bluebottle, Starlink through OneNZ was chosen to support a request for rapid fielding of this bearer in support of the Royal New Zealand Navy.

2. *Second, what is Starlink being used for on Bluebottle? Sending back live video, as suggested? Can you tell me anything about the field acceptance testing of this - did it work?*

This information is withheld in full in accordance with section 6(a) of the OIA to avoid prejudice to the security or defence of New Zealand.

3. *When did Starlink become operational in the Navy, and on Bluebottle specifically?*

March 2025.

4. *The OIA noted using Starlink for classified information was being considered. Is it still being considered?*

Information concerning classified communications networks and bearers is withheld in accordance with section 6(a) of the OIA for the reason explained above.

5. *Steve Alexander emailed on 19 March and said he hadn't seen this work for review, and that there were "issues with the approach and assumption". What approach and assumption was he referring to? If possible, what were the issues?*

The staff member had not been formally engaged in the process to date and was seeking assurances as part of his due diligence, which is good practise. His manager subsequently provided approval after an additional review was completed.

6. *Finally, as far as I can tell, following a 21 March email from Director, Operations and Intelligence Law, there were meetings called. All redacted. But there seemed to be no communications in the scope of this OIA following that, until something on April 30.*  
 a. *What happened on April 30?*

There is no significance to the April 30 date.

- b. *What was going on in the meantime? Comms up until this point had been very consistent, so I'm sure work was being progressed. Could you give me some idea as to what was going on?*

NZDF personnel continued with other business as usual activities.

*...could I please request all information regarding project pro\_4191 (mentioned in OIA) in a keyword-searchable format?*

As noted in the relevant email from Enclosure 2 of the response of 11 July 2025, the pro\_4191 file contained correspondence and documents. These had already been considered during the work to prepare that response. Specifically the correspondence is duplication of those already provided to you (pages 49-65 of Enclosure 2), an email between the NZDF and One NZ concerning specifics of the scope of works that is withheld in accordance with sections 6(a) and 9(2)(ba)(i) of the OIA, and draft documents that are withheld in accordance with section 9(2)(g)(i) of the OIA. These are the same reasons provided in the response of 11 July 2025.

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

**GA Motley**  
 Brigadier  
 Chief of Staff HQNZDF