



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

OIA-2026-5736

15th April 2026

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 24 March 2026 seeking information from the former Minister of Defence concerning aviation fuel use. The following parts of your request were partially transferred to the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

...how much fuel, particularly aviation fuel is being used for NZ to host the military exercises currently being undertaken in NZ by the NZDF with partner governments...Please include any reports, emails, briefings, messages that may pertain to the above between your office; or between defence officials.

- *any advice either you or the leadership of NZDF was provided regarding the **multinational low-level flying exercise (March 23- April 2 2026) involving the C130s with multiple nations in Marlborough, Tasman, Buller Grey and Westland area.***
- *whether anyone in defence considered the wasteful nature of these operations at a time when NZ may face aviation fuel shortages.*
- *...what steps the NZDF is taking to mitigate wasteful usage of fuel; and*
 - a. *how much aviation fuel is being used for this exercise given AvJet fuel is soon to run low in New Zealand.*
 - b. *what decisions were made by your government to proceed with such a wasteful exercise when we know energy is soon to become scarce; and who made these decisions.*
 - c. *whether the participating nations are using their own fuel, or if it is coming from NZ*

Please include any reports, emails, briefings, messages that may pertain to the above between your office; or between defence officials.

The NZDF has reviewed all activity in light of the current global fuel situation and has cancelled or delayed activities that are deemed discretionary. For example, the Royal New Zealand Air Force withdrew from participation in the Wanaka Air show. Activities that are not discretionary are those that deliver operational responses or are essential for ensuring

the NZDF is prepared and ready to provide the outputs directed by the Government, both domestically and within the wider region.

Practicing and rehearsing interoperability is a key outcome for almost every NZDF activity. Exercise Mobility Astra had already been planned and it was a readiness training activity for the NZDF's Fixed Wing Tactical Transport fleet. This exercise used 224,510 litres of aviation fuel, noting that original planning was for up to 500,000 litres of fuel. All fuel used for the exercise was drawn from within New Zealand and it was ordered up to 120 days ahead of the event.

Importantly, the fuel used by the NZDF is not the same as that used by civilian operators. The usage on this activity has no bearing on stocks available to civilian operators and does not affect the prices being set by commercial operators.

As a planned routine event for the NZDF, there are no reports, emails, briefings, or messages pertaining to *the wasteful usage of fuel*.

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