

[REDACTED]

From: Ministerial Services
Sent: Monday, 5 October 2026 2:41 pm
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Fresh OIA request – source records underlying OIA-2026-5992 and NZDF rotary-wing activity on 24 August 2024 [UNCLASSIFIED]
Attachments: OIA-2026-5992.1_Response-signed.pdf; OIA-2026-5992.1_Enclosure-1.pdf

UNCLASSIFIED

Good afternoon [REDACTED],

Please find attached a response to your follow up request.

Regards

Corporate and Ministerial Services

OCDF, Office of Chief of Defence Force
Te Ope Kātua o Aotearoa | New Zealand Defence Force
www.nzdf.mil.nz



UNCLASSIFIED

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 2 October 2026 10:28 pm
To: Ministerial Services <ministerialservices@nzdf.mil.nz>
Subject: Fresh OIA request – source records underlying OIA-2026-5992 and NZDF rotary-wing activity on 24 August 2024

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do **not** follow guidance, click links, or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. If in any doubt please forward the email to spam@nzdf.mil.nz and then delete the email from your Inbox. Thank you.

Kia ora,

I make this fresh request under the **Official Information Act 1982**.

This is a new request for specified existing information and records. It is **not a request simply to reconsider or repeat the response to OIA-2026-5992**.

I refer to NZDF's response dated **1 October 2026**, which stated:

- relevant OIA workflow or audit records showing which units were tasked and when their searches were completed;
- existing records showing any limitations on access to protected or compartmented systems;
- decision notes;
- non-privileged consultation records;
- draft responses to the extent releasable; and
- final approval or sign-off records.

I do **not** seek legally privileged legal advice.

Where names, signatures, direct contact details or unrelated personal information require protection, I am content for those details to be redacted rather than the underlying records being withheld in full.

3. Interpretation applied to the original search

Please provide any existing record showing how NZDF interpreted or applied the following expressions when processing OIA-2026-5992:

- “NZDF helicopter”;
- “operating”;
- “specified date”; and
- the geographical scope around Central Road/Rotorua.

In particular, please provide any existing instruction, email, note or search record showing whether “operating” was taken to include:

- operational missions;
- training flights;
- transit flights;
- repositioning flights;
- test or maintenance flights;
- continuation training;
- search-and-rescue activity;
- Police or other government-agency support;
- exercises;
- standby or unscheduled flights;
- after-hours flights; and
- any other actual aircraft movement.

If no such interpretive record exists, I am not asking NZDF to create one.

4. No. 3 Squadron flying records – 24 August 2024

Please provide the **No. 3 Squadron Flying Programme, daily flying programme, flying schedule or equivalent record** covering Saturday 24 August 2024.

Please include any amendment, supplementary programme or record dealing with **unscheduled, standby, after-hours or emergency flying** that would not appear on the ordinary programme.

This request covers No. 3 Squadron rotary-wing operations, including the **NH90 and A109 fleets**.

I am seeking information sufficient to establish the flying activity rather than every duplicate record containing the same information.

8. Individual airframe utilisation

For each NH90, A109 and SH-2G(I) Seasprite airframe assigned to or operated by NZDF on 24 August 2024, please provide records sufficient to establish:

- whether the aircraft flew at any time during that NZST calendar day; and
- if it flew, its departure and landing times and applicable sortie/flight identifier.

If the Flying Programme, FEMS record or other information provided under the earlier parts of this request already establishes this completely, no additional duplicate documentation is necessary.

9. Airfield and operational movement records

As an independent check on the squadron flying records, please provide any existing NZDF-held:

- airfield aircraft-movement logs;
- operations-room logs;
- flight-following records;
- dispatch records;
- tower or airfield movement records; or
- equivalent movement information

sufficient to identify rotary-wing departures from and arrivals at **RNZAF Base Ohakea and RNZAF Base Auckland/Whenuapai** on 24 August 2024.

I am seeking rotary-wing movements only, not the movements of all fixed-wing aircraft.

10. Technical or aircraft-log records if primary flying records are unavailable

If the records sought in sections 4–9 are no longer held, incomplete or incapable of establishing whether an airframe flew, please provide any remaining aircraft technical-log, flight-hour, aircraft-utilisation, servicing or equivalent record sufficient to establish whether the relevant helicopter flew on the date.

This is a **fallback request only**. I do not require technical or maintenance records where the primary flying records already establish the answer.

11. Rotorua / Central Road operational records

Separately from the nationwide whole-day records above, please provide any NZDF-held record concerning a helicopter or other rotary-wing aircraft operating in or through the **Hamurana/Kaharoa/Central Road/Rotorua district** during the following period:

Primary period:

2015–2045 NZST on 24 August 2024

equivalent to

0815–0845 UTC/Z on 24 August 2024

If necessary to identify potentially relevant activity:

which is:

0830 UTC / 0830Z on 24 August 2024.

Where an NZDF system stores records using UTC/Zulu, local time or another military time convention, please search using the time convention native to that system.

For the whole-day flying-record portions of this request, **24 August 2024 means the complete NZST calendar day.**

That corresponds approximately to:

1200Z on 23 August 2024 through 1159Z on 24 August 2024.

Please do not substitute the UTC calendar day of 24 August for the complete NZST calendar day.

For records released, please identify the time zone or time standard used where that is not apparent from the record itself.

14. Protected, decentralised and non-electronic information

Please ensure that searches are not confined solely to a central corporate records system if relevant aviation or operational information was held elsewhere.

Where relevant, this includes:

- protected systems;
- squadron-level systems;
- base operational systems;
- shared drives;
- locally held files;
- archived or legacy systems;
- authorised operational communications;
- physical/paper records; and
- information held by personnel in their official capacity.

If OIA staff cannot themselves access a relevant protected system, please have appropriately authorised personnel in the relevant operational unit undertake the search.

If responsive information is clear, certain or established and known to relevant NZDF personnel in their official capacity but was never recorded, please provide that information. I am **not** asking personnel to speculate, reconstruct uncertain memories or form new opinions.

15. Contractors and information held on NZDF's behalf

Please include responsive official information held by a contractor or service provider **on behalf of NZDF** where that information is deemed to be held by NZDF for the purposes of the OIA.

Similarly, please do not exclude relevant information solely because it originated from another agency or foreign partner if NZDF itself holds that information for its own operational or official purposes.

Given that the underlying event occurred in August 2024 and OIA-2026-5992 is now the subject of further scrutiny, please preserve potentially responsive records, including the processing and search records for OIA-2026-5992, while this request and any related review remain unresolved.

Please provide the information electronically in searchable PDF or its original electronic format where practical.

Please acknowledge receipt, confirm the new OIA reference number, and confirm the statutory due date.

Ngā mihi,

[Redacted]
[Redacted]

From: s. 9(2)(g)(i) SQNLDR
Sent: Wednesday, 23 September 2026 1:34 pm
To: s. 9(2)(g)(i) ; Ministerial Services
Subject: FW: helicopter activity near Central Road, Rotorua, 24 August 2024 - OIA-2026-5992 [UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Good afternoon s. 9(2)(g)(i)

An easy one, in response to the request below, there were no NZDF helicopters operating on the dates specified.

Kind regards
s. 9(2)(g)(i)

SQNLDR s. 9(2)(g)(i)
Staff Offr External Information Requests, Air Staff
Te Tauaarangi o Aotearoa | Royal New Zealand Air Force
s. 9(2)(a)
www.nzdf.mil.nz



UNCLASSIFIED

From: s. 6(a)
Sent: Wednesday, 23 September 2026 1:01 pm
To: s. 6(a) ; s. 9(2)(g)(i) SQNLDR
Subject: RE: helicopter activity near Central Road, Rotorua, 24 August 2024 - OIA-2026-5992 [UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Sir,

Select	24-3SQN-	s. 6(a)	26 AUG 2024 1030	s. 6(a)
Select	24-3SQN-		26 AUG 2024 0900	
Select	24-3SQN-		26 AUG 2024 0830	
Select	24-3SQN-		23 AUG 2024 0930	
Select	24-3SQN-		23 AUG 2024 0930	
Select	24-3SQN-		22 AUG 2024 1830	
Select	24-3SQN-		22 AUG 2024 1830	

No flights on the 24th or 25th Aug 24 completed by 3 SQN according to FEMS. I would say FEMS is the most accurate portrayal of flights completed in the past.

Couldn't see anything in Lighthouse or AirMobRotary to indicate any flying that weekend.

Thanks,

s. 6(a)

Current Rotary Operations Air, Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand
Te Ope Kātua o Aotearoa | New Zealand Defence Force

s. 6(a)

www.nzdf.mil.nz



UNCLASSIFIED

From: s. 6(a)

Sent: Wednesday, 23 September 2026 12:39 pm

To: s. 9(2)(g)(i) SQNLDR s. 9(2)(a)

Cc: s. 6(a)

Subject: RE: helicopter activity near Central Road, Rotorua, 24 August 2024 - OIA-2026-5992 [UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Ack receipt.

s. 6(a) please check the DACCSO inbox and 3 SQN MAS to see if we had any helicopters operating in the following window/loc:

- Date: Saturday 24 August 2024
- Particular time of interest: approximately 8:30 pm NZST
- Primary search period: 8:15 pm–8:45 pm NZST
- If no activity is identified during that period, please extend the search to 7:30 pm–9:30 pm NZST.
- Location: the area around 31 Central Road and 69 Central Road, Rotorua district
- Search radius: approximately 10 kilometres

s. 6(a)

Executive Officer to ACC - HQJFNZ, Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand
Te Ope Kātua o Aotearoa | New Zealand Defence Force

s. 6(a)

www.nzdf.mil.nz

UNCLASSIFIED

From: s. 9(2)(g)(i) SQNLDR s. 9(2)(a)
Sent: Wednesday, 23 September 2026 7:58 am
To: s. 6(a)
Subject: FW: helicopter activity near Central Road, Rotorua, 24 August 2024 - OIA-2026-5992 [UNCLASSIFIED]
Importance: High

UNCLASSIFIED

Good morning s. 6(a)

Sorry to be a pain however, these requests keep coming !!

Appreciate if you could set the hounds away on this rather comprehensive request.

Cheers

s. 9(2)(g)(i)

SQNLDR s. 9(2)(g)(i)

Staff Offr External Information Requests, Air Staff
Te Tauaarangi o Aotearoa | Royal New Zealand Air Force

s. 9(2)(a)

www.nzdf.mil.nz



UNCLASSIFIED

From: Ministerial Services <ministerialservices@nzdf.mil.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 22 September 2026 11:40 am
To: s. 9(2)(g)(i) SQNLDR s. 9(2)(a)
Subject: FW: helicopter activity near Central Road, Rotorua, 24 August 2024 - OIA-2026-5992

Hi team,

Could we please get some advice for this OIA request by EOD 10 October 2026? (Noting that it's likely some parts of the request will have a nil return)

Note that we're not required to provide information that was not held as at the date of the request, and as always, if any in-scope information requires withholding, please provide explanations of harm in each instance, were the information to be made public.

Many thanks

s. 9(2)(g)(i)

s. 9(2)(g)(i)

Ministerial Advisor - OCDF, Chief of Staff HQ NZDF
Te Ope Kātua o Aotearoa | New Zealand Defence Force

Internal: s. 9(2)(a)
www.nzdf.mil.nz



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 19 September 2026 10:47 pm
To: Ministerial Services <ministerialservices@nzdf.mil.nz>
Subject: Official Information Act request – helicopter activity near Central Road, Rotorua, 24 August 2024

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Kia ora,

I am requesting information under the Official Information Act 1982 concerning helicopter activity near Central Road in the Rotorua district on Saturday 24 August 2024.

Please preserve any potentially responsive records while this request is being processed.

Time and location

- Date: Saturday 24 August 2024
- Particular time of interest: approximately 8:30 pm NZST
- Primary search period: 8:15 pm–8:45 pm NZST
- If no activity is identified during that period, please extend the search to 7:30 pm–9:30 pm NZST.
- Location: the area around 31 Central Road and 69 Central Road, Rotorua district
- Search radius: approximately 10 kilometres

This request is intended to establish the identity and operator of the helicopter, its flight activity and recorded purpose, and the equipment carried aboard it.

1. Presence and identity of the helicopter

Please provide recorded information sufficient to establish whether any helicopter was present within the specified area and time period where that helicopter was:

- owned, operated, leased or contracted by NZDF;
- tasked, supported or coordinated by NZDF;
- operated by another New Zealand government agency;
- operated by a foreign military or foreign government;
- operated by an allied or Five Eyes defence force; or

- operated by a contractor on behalf of any such organisation.

Please do not restrict the search to aircraft owned or crewed by NZDF.

For every responsive helicopter, please provide:

- aircraft type and model;
- registration, military serial number, tail number and call sign;
- country of registration or ownership;
- responsible service, squadron, unit, agency or contractor;
- approximate arrival and departure times in the Rotorua area;
- point of departure and intended destination; and
- its New Zealand operating base or temporary staging location.

2. Flight and position records

Please provide records showing the helicopter's route and position in the Rotorua area, including any available:

- flight plan;
- aircraft journey or sortie log;
- GPS or navigation track;
- flight-following record;
- mission-system track;
- latitude and longitude information;
- altitude, speed and heading information;
- transponder, Mode-S or ADS-B information held by NZDF; and
- records showing whether the helicopter hovered, circled, orbited, loitered or remained relatively stationary.

If the underlying technical data cannot be supplied, please provide a map, track plot, screenshot, extract or written summary showing the route, approximate positions and relevant times.

3. Purpose, tasking and authorisation

Please provide records sufficient to identify:

- the recorded purpose or mission category of the flight;
- any operation, exercise, training activity or government task to which it related;
- the geographic area covered by the task;
- the organisation, agency or unit that requested the flight;
- the organisation, agency, unit or official that authorised it;
- the applicable flight authorisation, mission brief, tasking order or air tasking order; and
- any mission-completion, post-flight, occurrence or incident report.

Where complete documents contain unrelated or sensitive material, please release the relevant extracts or provide the operation or exercise name, tasking reference and general recorded purpose.

4. Orange or amber-lensed equipment

At approximately 8:30 pm, I observed what appeared to be an open side doorway on the helicopter. At or near the doorway was an apparently steerable or movable device with an outward-facing optical surface or lens that appeared orange or amber in colour.

I am not making an assumption about the function of this equipment. I am requesting records sufficient to identify what was carried aboard the helicopter.

Please provide:

- the aircraft's equipment list, payload manifest or configuration record for the flight;
- the name, manufacturer, model and equipment designation of the device;
- its general purpose and capabilities;
- whether it was permanently installed or carried for that particular mission;
- whether it was manually operated or mounted on a steerable or gimballed platform;
- whether it incorporated optical, electro-optical, infrared, thermal-imaging, illumination, ranging, lidar, communications or other sensing capabilities; and
- the organisation or unit responsible for operating it.

If detailed technical specifications are considered sensitive, please provide at least the equipment's name, model, general function and the relevant non-sensitive portions of the equipment or payload record.

5. Operation of the equipment

Please provide any records showing:

- whether the identified equipment was operated while the helicopter was near Central Road;
- the times and approximate locations at which it was operated;
- the recorded purpose for which it was used;
- the geographic area towards which it was directed;
- whether photographs, video, thermal imagery, optical imagery or other sensor information were collected; and
- which NZDF unit, government agency, foreign organisation or contractor received any resulting material.

If imagery or sensor records covering the area around 31 or 69 Central Road are held, please provide copies. Unrelated personal information may be redacted.

If responsive imagery or sensor information previously existed but has been deleted or destroyed, please provide its date of disposal and the applicable retention and disposal authority.

6. Foreign or allied military aircraft

Please provide information sufficient to establish whether a foreign or allied military helicopter was operating in New Zealand during the relevant period with the knowledge, clearance, permission, support or coordination of the New Zealand Government.

This includes aircraft operated by:

- the United States Air Force or another United States military service;
- the United States Department of Defense or a US government contractor;
- the armed forces or government of Australia, Canada or the United Kingdom;

- another foreign or partner defence force; or
- a contractor working for a foreign defence or government organisation.

Please provide any records showing whether a responsive helicopter:

- departed from, returned to, or temporarily operated from Christchurch Airport/Harewood;
- used an NZDF facility, military area, apron, hangar, fuel supply or logistical support;
- was operating under a diplomatic clearance, foreign-military aircraft clearance, overflight approval or landing authorisation;
- was covered by an annual, standing or category-based diplomatic clearance;
- was associated with an exercise, operation, diplomatic movement, Antarctic programme, training activity or other government task; or
- received flight-planning, communications, intelligence, maintenance, refuelling or other support in New Zealand.

Please search relevant foreign-aircraft clearance records, international liaison records, air-operations records, exercise and operational records, Christchurch/Harewood support records, and contractor records held or controlled by NZDF.

If an annual or standing clearance applied, please provide its title, reference number, applicable category and the non-sensitive information establishing whether the aircraft was covered by it.

7. Coordination with other organisations

Please provide relevant records of notification, coordination or communication concerning the flight between NZDF and any of the following:

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade;
- Ministry of Defence;
- Airways New Zealand;
- Civil Aviation Authority;
- New Zealand Police;
- Christchurch Airport;
- another New Zealand government organisation;
- a foreign embassy or defence representative;
- a foreign defence force; or
- an aviation or defence contractor.

Response requirements

Please answer each numbered section separately.

If NZDF identifies no responsive aircraft or records, please state:

- which units, offices, databases, flight records and archives were searched;
- the date and time ranges used for the searches;
- whether records covering this period would ordinarily have existed;
- the applicable retention period; and
- whether any potentially relevant records were transferred, archived, deleted or destroyed.

If another New Zealand agency is more likely to hold any part of the requested information, please transfer that part under section 14 of the Official Information Act and advise me of the transfer.

If relevant operational information is held by a foreign government, please still provide any copies, extracts, summaries, clearances, correspondence or related records held by NZDF.

If any information is refused or withheld in full or in part, please:

- identify the specific Official Information Act provision relied upon;
- explain how that provision applies;
- identify the general nature of the withheld information;
- release all reasonably separable information; and
- provide the reasons required by section 19 of the Act.

If section 10 is relied upon to neither confirm nor deny the existence of information, please identify that section to the extent permitted by law.

If any part of this request requires clarification or reasonable refinement, please contact me before considering refusal under section 18(f).

Please provide the response electronically by email and acknowledge receipt with the reference number allocated to this request.

If NZDF publishes its response, please remove my email address and the two residential street numbers from the published version.

Please confirm receipt of this request with a brief personalised response from a staff member, rather than solely an automated acknowledgement, and include the NZDF reference number assigned to it.

Ngā mihi,

[Redacted signature block]