



28 June 2023



Ref: OIA-2022/23-0860

Dear 

Official Information Act request for information provided to the Prime Minister regarding foreign aid or assistance offered following Cyclone Gabrielle

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request of 18 April 2023 relating to foreign assistance or aid offered following Cyclone Gabrielle. Part of your request was transferred to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) on 28 April 2023 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). The part transferred to DPMC was:

“For the dates February 12, 2023 to February 21, 2023:

[...]

All official advice provided/relayed to the Prime Minister [...] regarding foreign aid/assistance of any kind.”

On 25 May 2025, I wrote to you extending the time limit for response by 23 working days, to 29 June 2023. The additional time was needed because a search through a large quantity of information was needed to identify relevant information, and consultations were needed before a decision could be made on your request. I am now in a position to respond.

As noted in my letter to you of 25 May, there was a briefing provided by the DPMC Policy Advisory Group to the Prime Minister identified as relevant to your request. This briefing was withheld in full.

Please find attached a document consisting of a table of extracts from messages sent on the Signal platform. These are extract messages sent between 12 and 21 February 2023 from the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). The messages were sent to a group that included: the Prime Minister, the Minister for Emergency Management, Offices of the Prime Minister, and NEMA officials. This is the only remaining information identified as relevant to your request.

There is a small amount of information which has been withheld under section 6(a) of the Act, to protect the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of New Zealand.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

This response may be published on DPMC's website during our regular publication cycle. Typically, information is released monthly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

Yours sincerely



Anthony Richards
NEMA Chief Advisor to the Deputy Chief Executive Emergency Management

Enc: Relevant extracts from Signal messages

RELEASE UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982**Extracts from Messages sent on the Signal Platform from National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) Messages
12 – 21 February 2023**

The table below has extracts from messages sent to group including: the Prime Minister, the Minister for Emergency Management, Offices of the Prime Minister, and Minister for Emergency Management and NEMA officials.

Date and Time	Sender	Content
15 Feb 2023 0825hrs	Stefan Weir, Chief of Staff	<p>PM, Minister</p> <p>...</p> <p>Australia if offering support. We (via MFAT) are in contact with them about the support we might need eg aircraft, shipping, logistics, potable water generation, with a view of supporting communities isolated HB and Tairawhiti regions. Dave Gawn (CE NEMA) has been in regular contact with his aust counterpart during this event and will discuss this with him again today.</p> <p>Stefan Weir Chief of Staff NEMA</p>
18 Feb 2023 2146hrs	Jerry Holmes, Acting National Controller	<p>Kia Ora PM and Minister,</p> <p>Please see below this evening's key updates re the response and recovery to the impacts of Cyclone Gabrielle:</p> <p>...</p> <p>International Assistance:</p> <p>There have been 18 offers for international assistance, one of these offers (from Australia) has been accepted and there is likely to be a second one accepted by tomorrow morning.</p> <p>End</p>
20 Feb 2023 2157hrs	David Coetzee, Acting National Controller	<p>Kia Ora PM and Minister, please see below for our shortened evening update:</p> <p>...</p> <p>International assistance:</p> <p>Australia: 25 personnel are supporting NZ USAR with assessments ADF has been requested to provide 1 x fixed wing aircraft to support delivering palletised and bulk stores, personnel and equipment</p> <p>Fiji: Subject to Fijian PM sign-off tomorrow morning (21/7), to arrive on Friday (NZDF will support the uplift): 56 military personnel – forward deployments 5 NDMO – working in the NCC 3 Fire personnel – linking up with FENZ</p>

Date and Time	Sender	Content
		<p>USA: Have been supporting soft imaging (on-going We accepted an offer of FEMA Response Teams -under our MOU with FEMA. We have asked for more detail re capacity & capability so not certain what we're getting yet. Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DART) on standby We have requested (awaiting reply): s6(a) [REDACTED] End</p>

Released under the Official Information Act 1982