



20 October 2023

[REDACTED]
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Ref: OIA-2023/24-0229

Dear [REDACTED]

Official Information Act request relating to space security

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 6 October 2023. You requested:

*“Can you please define what “space security” is?
Where does our country’s “space security” begin and where does it end?
Is there any border to our space? Where is it and who controls it?”*

For ease of response, I have chosen to address your questions as one, rather than responding to each question individually as I believe this better provides the information you are seeking.

New Zealand space security

New Zealand is heavily reliant on space-based capabilities to deliver a wide range of services that underpin our daily lives in New Zealand, including communications, navigation, remote sensing, earth observation, weather services, and financial transactions. Denial of space services can have significant national security implications for the people of New Zealand.

Space security is therefore about protecting New Zealand’s interests in space from threats that would do us harm. Our goal is to ensure the continued availability of these systems which requires complete access to and freedom to operate responsibly in space.

The government’s approach to space security is laid out in the recently released National Security Strategy, *Secure Together – Tō Tātou Korowai Manaaki*, and the National Space Policy. Our approach to managing threats in space includes the regulation of space activities in New Zealand, partnership with local industry and international partners, and support for international norms and standards to help ensure a sustainable and peaceful space environment.

New Zealand recognises that outer space is shared by all humankind, and that space activities can benefit or impact the interests of all countries. Space is governed by the Outer Space Treaty, which outlines in Article II that “outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, is not subject to national appropriation by claim of sovereignty, by means of use or occupation, or by any other means.” As such, no country, including New Zealand, can claim sovereignty in space.

A rules-based approach to the responsible and peaceful use of space by all actors is necessary to ensure that access to, and use of, space can be maintained on a long-term basis, and that risks can be managed. New Zealand is party to the key international agreements that promote a safe, sustainable, and peaceful space environment. These international space treaties are reflected in our domestic laws and policies, including the Outer Space and High-altitude Activities Act 2017 which governs space regulation in New

Zealand. This includes preserving New Zealand's interests and adhering to our international obligations relating to space activities.

Space security involves the work of a number of government agencies, including the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment, the New Zealand Ministry of Defence, the New Zealand Defence Force, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the New Zealand Intelligence Community, the Ministry for the Environment, and more. We work closely together to protect New Zealand's interests in space.

Information publicly available

The following information is covered by your request and is publicly available. Accordingly, I am refusing to reproduce these documents under section 18(d) of the Act.

- Secure Together – Tō Tātaou Korowai Manaaki: www.dpmc.govt.nz/system/files/2023-08/National%20Security%20Strategy_August%202023.pdf
- National Space Policy: www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/26656-national-space-policy

Additional Information

You may also be interested in the following information referenced within my response, which can be accessed as follows:

- United Nations Outer Space Treaty: www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/spacelaw/treaties/outerspacetreaty.html
- Outer Space and High-Altitude Activities Act 2017: www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2017/0029/latest/DLM6966275.html

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

This response will be published on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet'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



Tony Lynch
Deputy Chief Executive