



13 June 2025



Reference: OIA-2024/25-0899

Dear 

Official Information Act request relating to Governments use of Starlink

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 15 May 2025. You requested:

'Could I please have all information held on Starlink. Specifically, I would like this to cover:

- 1. Advice prepared for officials around the use of Starlink*
- 2. All information regarding the OneNZ/Vodafone deal with Starlink*
- 3. All communications between the Starlink company and the New Zealand government*
- 4. All information regarding the adoption of Starlink technologies by other countries.'*

You have requested information relating to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC). The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is a departmental agency hosted by DPMC therefore, this response includes NEMA.

We scoped your request across all DPMC business units, including NEMA, and on 22 May 2025 you were advised via email that your request above would require substantial collation and research to answer and would more than likely be refused under section 18(f) of the Act. You refined your request on 23 May 2025 to be for the following:

'Really, what I'm after is copies of internal communications and advice between 1 January 2024 and 15 May 2025, regarding the possibility of spending Government money on Starlink for any purpose: defence, natural hazards, etc. Even if the answer was eventually a 'no', I'd like to see the discussions had, if they exist.'

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has a focused operational interest in the use of Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite technologies to support emergency preparedness, response, and recovery. These technologies offer supplementary connectivity options in scenarios where traditional infrastructure may be unavailable, such as during large-scale natural disasters or in remote locations.

While NEMA has accessed Starlink's services to support its own operational needs and to facilitate access for other government agencies, this does not represent an endorsement of one provider over another. Rather, it reflects the availability of an off-the-shelf solution that met immediate emergency management requirements during, and immediately following the North Island Severe Weather Event (NISWE). NEMA continues to explore the broader utility of LEO

connectivity and is actively considering how best to support diverse technology solutions across the Emergency Management Sector through existing and emerging providers.

The discussions relating to the possibility of government spending on Starlink span multiple agencies and operational contexts. Identifying and collating all internal communications and advice between 1 January 2024 and 15 May 2025, that is held by NEMA, would require substantial collation and research across dispersed information systems. Accordingly, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act.

I have considered whether consulting with you further may enable a reframing of your request, such that the reason for refusal is alleviated; however, I did not identify any amendment that would enable us to readily respond. I have also considered extending the timeframe for response and/or fixing a charge as per sections 18A(1) and 18B of the Act and determined that neither would enable or remove the reason for refusal.

Also identified as relevant to your request are some briefings provided by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet Policy Advisory Group to the Prime Minister. These briefings are provided to the Prime Minister in confidence to support him in his role as leader of the Government and chair of Cabinet. These briefings are withheld in their entirety under the following sections of the Act:

- s9(2)(f)(ii), to maintain collective and individual ministerial responsibility
- s9(2)(f)(iv), to maintain the confidentiality of advice tendered by or to Ministers and officials
- s9(2)(g)(i), to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion.

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



Stefan Weir
Chief of Staff