



4 September 2025



Reference: OIA-2025/26-0127

Tēnā koe [redacted],

### **Official Information Act request relating to aviation in emergencies**

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 18 August 2025. You requested:

*Pls fwd this to the appropriate OIA people.*

*FENZ has said that since Cyclone Gabrielle Fire and Emergency has participated in NEMA-led workshops to review the approach to aviation systems that will come into effect during a significant national event.*

*Re this, [redacted] requests release in full and in fully searchable and copyable format, of:*

- The most substantive and up to date 3 documents related to the 'approach' (as judged by NEMA according to what is in the public interest)*
- Has NEMA at any time since start of 2023 communicated with the NZ Helicopter Assn about the NZHA or part of it or related to it (eg members), running air operations in an emergency (I note you may use different language than this, but this would encompass anything around fixed wing or choppers during a Cyclone like Gabrielle, or in an AF8 quake situation etc) ?*
  - o Pls summarise each such interaction, by date and nature*
  - o If it was ongoing, pls outline the various significant stages of it*
  - o Pls provide full details of the outcome of any offer including if NEMA did not take it up, and why not*
- Records of any such interactions between the NEMA and the NZHA including summaries of verbal interactions, minutes or similar, and substantive other comms or documents\**
- Has NEMA considered any similar such approach or suggestion from any other entity in that time?; if so pls detail what, who and with what outcome*
- Figures for each of the last five years, per year, of NEMA/CDEM/similar (system has had various entities in charge, so covering them all) of total spending and total hours of operation for aviation responses to significant events, broken down by choppers v fixed wing.*
  
- So the public can understand where the system is at in looking out for them in a big disaster, can NEMA pls bring us up to date on what it has done and why, with what aim, re 'the approach to aviation systems that will come into effect during a significant national event.*

*\*IN the above, 'document/s' includes but is not limited to any kind of document, at any stage including preliminary, draft, and final; including report/s, memo/s, business case/s, aide memoir/s, briefing/s, internal guiding document or similar, policy advice papers, Cabinet committee papers, advice to Cabinet committees, minute/s, update/s, agenda/s, file notes, risk review/s, proof-of-concept report/s; and with any engaged parties including but not limited to the board, any minister, and the executive leadership 'Communication/s' refers to any and all comms including electronic, email, Whatsapp and text, excepting purely administration comms; between parties (i.e. both sides of any communications) in all cases; with any and all appendices and/or attachments; with any and all items dated as to their creation and other relevant dates such as review or sending up the chain; this includes any VERBAL communications including briefings, discussions and reporting, in which case pls provide a recording or a full summary of what was said (as per Ombudsman's instructions)*

*Please provide all relevant attachments and appendices.*

*Please date any and all of the released info; pls release all attachments and appendices*

*Please redact all junior non-decisionmakers' names.*

*Please make sure all info is searchable and copyable.*

*Please provide documents where sought, and not statements.*

*Please provide links to already published info within scope, including any OIAs.*

*Please do not refuse on grounds of proactive release is imminent, as this is not helpful to the public when it is not clear just when it will be released.*

*Please do not refuse on grounds of proactive release is imminent; however, if you do, pls take note of the Ombudsman's guidance that, "As a matter of good practice, agencies should provide the precise or approximate date by which the information will be published."*

*I ask anything within the spirit of the request be included in the response.*

*Please get back to me with any queries within 7 working days; pls advise of any need to transfer any of these questions anywhere, within 7 working days.*

On 19 August 2025, Anthony Frith in the Communications Team from the National Emergency Management Agency, spoke with you over the phone about your request. It was explained to you that the workshops highlighted in your request were for Catastrophic Planning, which is done at a very high level. You were also informed it was likely that there would be nothing held relating to the New Zealand Helicopter Association (NZHA) information as NEMA's remit does not extend to the granular details of air operations.

In addition, Mr Frith provided you with a publicly available link to the only document relevant to your request, the Catastrophic Planning Handbook, and directed you to the relevant section on air transportation.

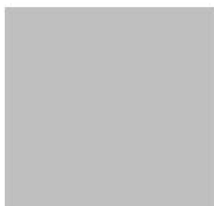
For completeness, checks were completed of our Information Management Systems for anything in scope of the remainder of your request, however, nothing was identified. Therefore, the remainder of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information requested does not exist.

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.

If you would like to submit any media queries related to this request, please contact our Manager of Communications Anthony Frith at [anthony.frith@nema.govt.nz](mailto:anthony.frith@nema.govt.nz)

Nāku noa, nā,



**Stefan Weir**  
**Chief of Staff**