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New Zealand

OIA-2023-4862

// December 2023



Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 13 November 2023 requesting, the following:

- *How much has been spent in each of the past few years on the military's response to fires and floods?*
- *How much is budgeted for in this financial year? If budgets have been finalised for future years, could you please tell me for these years too?*
- *Here in Australia, there are fears that responding to these disasters is taking the military away from its primary purpose, with consequences for personnel (many ADF personnel helping during the Black Summer bushfires, for example, had to give up rest time, which is obviously not good for welfare), funding, and readiness. Are there similar concerns in New Zealand?*
- *With regards to the Auckland floods – could you tell me please how much that response cost the NZDF, how long the commitment lasted, and what assets were deployed?*

Parts 1, 2 and 4 of your request have been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). On 15 November 2023, you clarified part 1 of your request confirming you are seeking information for the past three years.

The funding for providing assistance in emergency situations forms part of the operational budget of the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) under Output 4.3 – Assistance to the Civil Power and Provision of a Public Service in Emergency Situations, and Output 5.2 – Military Operations that contribute to Regional Security. The budget for these outputs for the current financial year are publicly available in Vote Defence Force<sup>1</sup>, and the actual output expenses are publicly available in the NZDF Annual Report<sup>2</sup>.

As the NZDF response to floods (including flooding from cyclones) and fires is included in the overall budget for the outputs described above, accounting for all of the costs for each individual event during a particular financial year is not always readily retrievable. For that reason a breakdown of the costs for all such events for the past three financial years cannot be provided in accordance with section 18(f) of the OIA.

<sup>1</sup> <https://budget.govt.nz/budget/pdfs/estimates/v3/est23-v3-deffor.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nzdf.mil.nz/assets/Uploads/DocumentLibrary/NZDF-Annual-Report-2023.PDF>

To the extent that incidental costs<sup>3</sup> are readily retrievable, approximate amounts are provided in the table below. Where the costs are not readily retrievable they are reported as N/A (not available). Since the NZDF response to the Auckland Floods and Cyclone Gabrielle took place in quick succession a separation of the costs is not available.

Event	FY 2020/21	FY 2021/22	FY 2022/23
Canterbury/Westport/Nelson/West Coast/Buller/Marlborough Floods (May 2021 to July 2021)	\$17,574	\$77,391	
Northland Fires (January 2022)		\$92,574	
Southland Floods (February 2022)		N/A	
Tairāwhiti Floods (March 2022/April 2022)		N/A	
Auckland Floods and Tropical Cyclone Gabrielle (January 2023 to April 2023)			\$1,741,462
Tropical Cyclone Judy and Tropical Cyclone Kevin (March 2023)			\$17,646
Tropical Cyclone Lola (October 2023/November 2023)			N/A
Tropical Cyclone Mal (November 2023)			N/A
Total	\$17,574	\$169,965	\$1,759,108

The NZDF response to the Auckland floods occurred between January and February 2023. Information is publicly available on the NZDF website<sup>4</sup>.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website, with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely

**AJ WOODS**

Air Commodore

Chief of Staff HQNZDF

<sup>3</sup> Incidental costs include, but are not limited to: travel; accommodation and food. These costs do not include the salaries for personnel or the use of platforms as these are absorbed within the NZDF operational budget.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nzdf.mil.nz/media-centre/news/defence-force-aids-auckland-in-flood-emergency/>  
<https://www.nzdf.mil.nz/media-centre/news/nzdf-ready-to-assist-in-auckland-and-regions/>  
<https://www.nzdf.mil.nz/media-centre/news/nzdf-deploys-specialist-team-and-clean-up-parties-as-cyclone-gabrielle-approaches/>