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OIA-2024-5037

(9 June 2024

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 21 May 2024 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), the following information:

*- A timeline of events including who was informed and when (including CDF, and the Minister and Associate Minister) about the incident involving HMSNZ Te Kaha on May 16 at Kauri Point.*

HMNZS Te Kaha made contact with the Kauri Point wharf at 8:32am on 16 May 2024. After determining the initial details of the incident, the Commanding Officer of the ship (CO) notified the Maritime Component Command at 9:20am. At 9:25am, the CO notified the Captain Fleet Operation Readiness who then notified the Acting Chief of Navy, who in turn notified the Office of the Chief of Defence Force (OCDF). In line with the 'no surprises' principle, OCDF then informed the office of the Minister of Defence. These verbal notifications occurred rapidly once the facts had been ascertained.

*- any reports, briefings and advice relating to the May 16 incident and the subsequent investigation.*

The following information was provided to the Minister of Defence in the Defence Weekly Report for the week of 15 May 2024:

*Damage Sustained to HMNZS TE KAHA*

*On 16 May at Kauri Point Wharf in Auckland, TE KAHA experienced minor damage to its bow after coming into contact with the wharf whilst berthing in near gale force winds. The incident resulted in a small hole in the hull above the waterline. No personnel were injured in the incident. Port of Auckland tugs were in attendance at the time assisting the ship to berth.*

*TE KAHA is now back at the Devon port Naval Base and repair work has started. The actual damage was a 60cm split. As the split was well above the waterline, the repair can be conducted while the ship is alongside a wharf. The repair, utilising a patch, is straightforward and means the ship is expected to be back at sea within a fortnight. While the repair work is being conducted, other maintenance and training will also be carried out. This will ensure that there will be a negligible impact to the ship's longer term programme and preparations for future tasks.*

*An internal investigation commenced on the day of the incident, which is standard practice in events of this nature.*

- details of any damage to the wharf.*
- details of damage to the vessel, including dimensions of the hole, and necessary repairs and costs. What is the definition of "minor damage" as opposed to major, as reported to The Post on May 20.*

Initial reporting produced immediately after the contact is part of the ongoing investigation into the event and is withheld in accordance with section 6(c) of the OIA to avoid prejudice to that process.

The ship experienced impact damage to the starboard bow just in front of the anchor pocket. The split was 60 cm long and indented to nearly 15cm at the point of impact where the distortion was at the maximum. The area of the impact was approximately two metres above the waterline and did not result in any water ingress to the hull. This damage is considered minor as it involved only superficial damage to the outer skin of the ship, and the structure was not damaged or deformed. The estimated cost for repair is \$220,000.

- Why was the decision taken to dock in "near gale force" winds - and what was the wind speed at the time.*

The mean wind speed at the time that berthing was taking place was within the identified tolerances for the activity and has been identified as being 23-25 knots, or a "strong breeze" on the Beaufort Scale.

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