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OIA-2023-4802

70 September 2023

Ben

fyi-request-23286-f9f244c3@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ben

I refer to your email of 28 June 2023 to the Office of the Prime Minister requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), information concerning the Prime Minister's trip to China. Parts 1 – 3 of your request was transferred to the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) in accordance with section 14(b)(ii) of the OIA.

- 1. What was the rationale behind the decision to send two jets instead of exploring more cost-effective alternatives, considering the economic impact and potential savings for taxpayers?*
- 2. Could you provide a breakdown of the specific costs associated with deploying two jets, including fuel, maintenance, staffing, and any other relevant expenses?*
- 3. Were there any contingency plans in place in case both jets experienced technical difficulties simultaneously, and if so, what were they?*

The cost for transporting members of the Government and guests of the State forms part of the operational budget of the NZDF under Output 4.4 – Military Assistance to Civil Authorities in Non-Emergency Situations. No additional funding is required for these missions. Information concerning Output 4.4 is publicly available in the Annual Report on the NZDF website¹.

From this funding, the short-term tasking costs for the primary aircraft was \$371,010.50 and \$243,752.70 for the back-up aircraft. These costs include marginal personnel costs, fuel, airport charges and other associated costs in relation to the flight. Short-term tasking rates do not include workshop maintenance, personnel salaries, depreciation and capital charge.

The Department of Internal Affairs, through the Ministerial Services Group, discusses the requirements for VIP transport tasks with the Royal New Zealand Air Force. It was agreed that the strategic importance and compressed timeline of the visit required a back-up aircraft to be available. The back-up aircraft was the only contingency aspect of the task provided by the NZDF. As the lead agency for the visit arrangements, you may wish to contact the Department of Internal Affairs for information on any additional contingency options.

¹ <https://www.nzdf.mil.nz/assets/Uploads/DocumentLibrary/22-0341-NZDF-Annual-Report-2022-WEB.PDF>

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 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.

Yours sincerely

AJ WOODS

Air Commodore

Chief of Staff HQNZDF
