

1 May 2018

Allen Reynolds

By: FYI.org.nz

Dear Mr Reynolds

OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

We refer to your request for information under the Official Information Act 1982 (“OIA”) set out on the FYI.org.nz website on 2 April 2018 at: <https://fyi.org.nz/request/7550-aviation-safety-and-rpas-drones-in-controlled-airspace>.

You have requested the following information regarding drones spotted flying illegally through controlled airspace in New Zealand (“illegal incidents”) for the period 1 January 2016 to 31 March 2018 for each incident:

1. Date, time and location
2. Aerodrome name and ICAO code (if within 4km)
3. RPAS details
4. Details of other aircraft involved
5. Nature of the incident
6. Details of people and any injuries
7. Agencies informed/involved i.e. CAA, TAIC, NZ Police
8. The agencies actions
9. Outcome e.g. Court case, fines, drone/operator not found

Background

Sightings of drones operating without approval in controlled airspace typically come to Airways’ attention via three sources:

1. A pilot alerts an air traffic controller to the presence of a drone operating in controlled airspace;
2. A member of the public alerts an air traffic controller to the presence of a drone operating close to an aerodrome;
3. On a rare occasion, a controller may sight a drone operating without approval at (or close to) an aerodrome.

Therefore it is impossible for Airways to categorically confirm the number of drones flying illegally (without consent) in controlled airspace. For the purposes of this OIA we have provided information on drones that, in the main, were sighted by others and reported to us as flying in controlled airspace. Furthermore, if an incident is reported to a controller it is Airways’ standard procedure to call the Police, provided it is operationally safe for the controller to leave their position to do so and the CAA is also subsequently informed.

Questions one and two

We provide the information requested below. Please note that while we hold the ICAO codes of airfields (and have disclosed this to you in good faith) we do not hold the information to determine if a drone is 4km within an aerodrome or not as we do not know all the local topography¹. Additionally, for this reason, we have provided the name of the air traffic control tower or radar sector terminal that the drone sighting was reported to, rather than the aerodrome name.

Occurrence Date	Time (UTC)	Location Of Incident ²	Aerodrome name	ICAO code
5/01/2016	1:21	CH	Christchurch Tower	NZCH
5/01/2016	23:00	RO	Rotorua Tower	NZRO
7/01/2016	22:10	CH	Christchurch Tower	NZCH
9/01/2016	1:57	TG	Tauranga Tower	NZTG
1/02/2016	0:43	GS	Gisborne Tower	NZGS
9/02/2016	22:10	AA	Auckland Tower	NZAA
20/02/2016	0:01	CH	Christchurch Tower	NZCH
20/02/2016	4:45	NS	Nelson Tower	NZNS
22/02/2016	2:40	WN	Wellington Tower	NZWN
1/03/2016	21:00	GS	Gisborne Tower	NZGS
7/03/2016	3:21	WN	Wellington Tower	NZWN
14/03/2016	0:02	AA	Auckland Tower	NZAA
16/03/2016	3:53	TG	Tauranga Tower	NZTG
31/03/2016	0:15	TG	Tauranga Tower	NZTG
8/04/2016	21:57	WN	Wellington Tower	NZWN
22/04/2016	8:00	WN	Wellington Tower	NZWN
15/05/2016	2:47	HN	Hamilton Tower	NZHN
1/06/2016	6:40	PM	Palmerston North Tower	NZPP
4/06/2016	4:20	CH	Christchurch Tower	NZCH
4/06/2016	4:23	CH	Christchurch Tower	NZCH
4/06/2016	23:59	TG	Tauranga Tower	NZTG
13/06/2016	0:31	WN	Wellington Tower	NZWN
15/06/2016	5:20	WN	Wellington Tower	NZWN
2/07/2016	3:20	RO	Rotorua Tower	NZRO
9/07/2016	23:15	CH	Christchurch Tower	NZCH
13/07/2016	0:34	AA	Auckland Tower	NZAA
27/07/2016	4:52	TG	Tauranga Tower	NZTG
8/08/2016	7:00	WN	Wellington Tower	NZWN
9/08/2016	5:00	WN	Wellington Tower	NZWN
15/08/2016	6:00	WN	Wellington Tower	NZWN
16/08/2016	4:30	QN	Queenstown Tower	NZQN
19/08/2016	5:49	NS	Nelson Tower	NZNS
28/08/2016	2:32	HN	Hamilton Tower	NZHN
11/09/2016	1:33	CH	Christchurch Tower	NZCH
12/09/2016	22:36	MF	Milford Flight Service	NZNR
18/09/2016	14:06	CH	Christchurch Tower	NZCH
27/09/2016	5:23	NS	Nelson Tower	NZNS
1/10/2016	21:46	DN	Dunedin Tower	NZDN
7/10/2016	19:10	PM	Palmerston North Tower	NZPM
8/10/2016	5:55	AA	Auckland Terminal	
9/10/2016	1:15	NS	Nelson Tower	NZNS
9/10/2016	21:10	WN	Wellington Tower	NZWN
13/10/2016	23:35	NS	Nelson Tower	NZNS
20/10/2016	22:50	NV	Invercargill Tower	NZNV
22/10/2016	2:20	NS	Nelson Tower	NZNS
23/10/2016	1:23	TG	Tauranga Tower	NZTG

¹ Grounds for refusal under Section 18(g) of the OIA

² Generic only

31/10/2016	3:22	WN	Wellington Tower	NZWN
1/11/2016	0:09	WN	Wellington Tower	NZWN
5/11/2016	21:33	AA	Auckland Terminal	
11/11/2016	20:27	MF	Milford Flight Service	NZMF
11/11/2016	8:10	DN	Dunedin Tower	NZDN
22/11/2016	8:04	MI	Dunedin Tower	NZDN
26/11/2016	1:12	AA	Auckland Tower	NZAA
1/12/2016	23:51	MF	Milford Flight Service	NZMF
4/12/2016	4:27	AA	Auckland Terminal	
8/12/2016	1:00	QN	Queenstown Tower	NZQN
14/12/2016	9:30	CH	Christchurch Terminal	
22/12/2016	17:20	WN	Wellington Tower	NZWN
23/12/2016	5:08	BM	Woodbourne Tower	NZWB
24/12/2016	3:38	DN	Dunedin Tower	NZDN
23/01/2017	21:10	WP	Whenuapai Tower	NZWP
29/01/2017	1:50	QN	Queenstown Tower	NZQN
2/02/2017	23:09	WN	Wellington Tower	NZWN
8/02/2017	22:50	WN	Wellington Terminal	
17/02/2017	7:37	QN	Queenstown Tower	NZQN
18/02/2017	5:20	QN	Queenstown Tower	NZQN
19/02/2017	7:44	WN	Wellington Tower	NZWN
19/02/2017	6:13	WN	Wellington Tower	NZWN
24/02/2017	2:30	HN	Hamilton Tower	NZHN
25/02/2017	3:30	TG	Tauranga Tower	NZTG
25/02/2017	7:25	TG	Tauranga Tower	NZTG
25/02/2017	22:34	NP	New Plymouth Tower	NZNP
26/02/2017	4:38	AA	Auckland Tower	NZAA
27/02/2017	2:45	NV	Invercargill Tower	NZNV
6/03/2017	7:20	RO	Rotorua Tower	NZRO
14/03/2017	4:51	WB	Woodbourne Tower	NZWB
19/03/2017	2:28	CH	Christchurch Tower	NZCH
6/04/2017	6:02	QN	Queenstown Tower	NZQN
6/04/2017	23:15	NR	Napier Tower	NZNR
15/04/2017	23:49	WN	Wellington Tower	NZWN
29/04/2017	23:58	WN	Wellington Tower	NZWN
30/04/2017	19:36	AA	Auckland Tower	NZAA
6/05/2017	5:08	AA	Auckland Tower	NZAA
28/05/2017	3:45	WP	Whenuapai Tower	NZWP
8/07/2017	2:08	DN	Dunedin Tower	NZDN
19/07/2017	5:28	QN	Queenstown Tower	NZQN
24/07/2017	22:22	EMRAG	Auckland Waypoint	
25/07/2017	22:00	NS	Nelson Tower	NZNS
29/07/2017	5:35	NP	New Plymouth Tower	NZNP
2/08/2017	2:00	ML	Milford Flight Service	NZMF
5/08/2017	2:09	AA	Auckland Terminal	
21/08/2017	1:00	PN	Palmerston North Tower	NZPM
26/08/2017	4:58	AA	Auckland Terminal	
15/09/2017	23:17	WN	Wellington Tower	NZWN
17/09/2017	0:22	AA	Auckland Terminal	
25/09/2017	0:01	AA	Auckland Terminal	
28/09/2017	1:53	WN	Wellington Terminal	
13/10/2017	23:10	PN	Palmerston North Tower	NZPM
15/10/2017	2:53	WN	Wellington Terminal	
19/10/2017	2:55	QN	Queenstown Tower	NZQN
28/10/2017	1:50	WN	Wellington Tower	NZWN
29/10/2017	6:55	CH	Christchurch Tower	NZCH
31/10/2017	20:42	CH	Christchurch Tower	NZCH
5/11/2017	8:38	AA	Auckland Tower	NZAA
5/11/2017	8:39	AA	Auckland Tower	NZAA
5/11/2017	23:13	QN	Queenstown Tower	NZQN
19/11/2017	0:40	WB	Woodbourne Tower	NZWB
19/11/2017	4:43	WN	Wellington Tower	NZWN

20/11/2017	3:20	TG	Tauranga Tower	NZTG
25/11/2017	7:54	TG	Tauranga Tower	NZTG
26/11/2017	0:58	CH	Christchurch Tower	NZCH
1/12/2017	22:50	AA	Auckland Tower	NZAA
2/12/2017	2:10	DN	Dunedin Tower	NZDN
3/12/2017	2:50	QN	Queenstown Tower	NZQN
7/12/2017	3:30	QN	Queenstown Tower	NZQN
9/12/2017	0:52	CH	Christchurch Terminal	
11/12/2017	1:36	CH	Christchurch Tower	NZCH
11/12/2017	2:40	RO	Rotorua Tower	NZRO
12/12/2017	3:55	NS	Nelson Tower	NZNS
16/12/2017	22:36	GS	Gisborne Tower	NZGS
22/12/2017	1:46	WN	Wellington Tower	NZWN
24/12/2017	0:10	TG	Tauranga Tower	NZTG
27/12/2017	5:13	RO	Rotorua Tower	NZRO
28/12/2017	3:07	CH	Christchurch Terminal	
2/01/2018	19:44	GS	Gisborne Tower	NZGS
19/01/2018	2:34	DN	Dunedin Tower	NZDN
21/01/2018	7:20	NS	Nelson Tower	NZNS
4/02/2018	5:44	CH	Christchurch Tower	NZCH
9/02/2018	6:23	WN	Wellington Terminal	
9/02/2018	20:55	WN	Wellington Terminal	
13/02/2018	2:04	PP	Paraparaumu Flight Service	NZPP
18/02/2018	3:53	CH	Christchurch Tower	NZCH
19/02/2018	22:52	AA	Auckland Tower	NZAA
22/02/2018	21:46	WB	Woodbourne Tower	NZWB
23/02/2018	3:38	AA	Auckland Terminal	
27/02/2018	7:53	QN	Queenstown Tower	NZQN
28/02/2018	23:38	AA	Auckland Tower	NZAA
5/03/2018	23:45	AA	Auckland Terminal	
16/03/2018	8:40	CH	Christchurch Tower	NZCH
17/03/2018	19:13	AA	Auckland Tower	NZAA
17/03/2018	22:37	WN	Wellington Tower	NZWN
17/03/2018	22:38	QN	Queenstown Tower	NZQN
18/03/2018	22:23	PN	Palmerston North Tower	NZPM
25/03/2018	0:04	AA	Auckland Tower	NZAA
28/03/2018	23:05	QN	Queenstown Tower	NZQN
29/03/2018	1:05	QN	Queenstown Tower	NZQN
30/03/2018	2:38	AA	Auckland Terminal	
30/03/2018	19:00	GS	Gisborne Tower	NZGS

Question three

Airways refuses this part of your request as Airways does not hold RPAS details for each incident³.

Questions four and five

Given that your request involves a large quantity of information, time and resources to carry out this work, we are withholding the information on the basis that it requires substantial collation or research⁴.

Furthermore, we advise that beyond the information provided to you in this letter, we estimate that it will take approximately 62 hours in order to formally collate the information you have requested. In accordance with the Ministry of Justice charging guidelines, we will charge \$38 inclusive of GST per half

³ Section 18(g) of the OIA

⁴ Grounds to withhold under section 18(f) of the OIA

hour (after the first hour) spent extracting and compiling relevant data, making the charge for providing the information approximately \$5092.00 (plus materials used for consultations).

Should you wish to accept this charge, we will be seeking to extend the period for a response for a further 20 working days, in accordance with section 15A of the Official Information Act.

Question six

Airways does not hold any information relating to 'details of people' and 'any injuries'⁵.

Question seven

The information you have requested involves a large quantity of time and resources to manually go through and extract this information from reports. Unfortunately, we are withholding the information on the basis that it requires substantial collation and research⁶.

Question eight

Airways does not hold the information⁷. The information is connected more closely with the functions of the CAA and NZ Police⁸. Normally we would seek to transfer this question⁹ but as you have already requested this information from them on the FYI.org.nz site¹⁰, they will respond to this part of your request accordingly.

Question Nine

Airways does not hold the information¹¹. The information is connected more closely with the functions of the CAA and NZ Police¹². Normally, we would seek to transfer this question¹³ but as you have already requested this information from them on the FYI.org.nz site¹⁴, they will respond to this part your request accordingly.

Your rights

You are entitled to apply to the Ombudsman for a review of our decision pursuant to section 28(3) of the OIA.

Kind regards



Arama Eruera

Airways' OIA Officer

⁵ Grounds for refusal under Section 18(g) of the OIA

⁶ Grounds to withhold under section 18(f) of the OIA

⁷ First grounds for refusal under section 18(g)(i) of the OIA

⁸ Section 18(g)(ii) of the OIA

⁹ Section 14 of the OIA

¹⁰ See: <https://fyi.org.nz/request/7549-aviation-safety-and-rpas-drones-update#outgoing-13708> and <https://fyi.org.nz/request/7563-aviation-safety-and-rpas-drones-searches-for-operators-drones>

¹¹ Section 18(g)(i) of the OIA

¹² Section 18(g)(ii) of the OIA

¹³ Section 14 of the OIA

¹⁴ See: <https://fyi.org.nz/request/7549-aviation-safety-and-rpas-drones-update#outgoing-13708> and <https://fyi.org.nz/request/7563-aviation-safety-and-rpas-drones-searches-for-operators-drones>