



8 August 2023

Ombudsman Ref: 571551
DPMC Ref: OIA-2021/22-0477

Harold
fyi-request-17332-84ec6b37@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Harold

Official Information Act request for information associated with the National Risk Register and Draft National Risk Report 2018

I refer to your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) on 25 October 2021. You requested:

"...a list of every risk profile in the register, including the following details for each profile

- 1) The profile title*
- 2) The identity of the coordinating agency or agencies*
- 3) The date that the current profile was issued (month and year).*
- 4) The profile security classification*

I would also like to request copies of these briefings:

- 1) November 2017: "Improving the management of nationally significant risks" [document ID 4000794]*
- 2) December 2017: "National Risk Register 2018" [document ID 4015680]*
- 3) April 2018: "Cover-note in explanation of attached National Risk items" [document ID 4377343]*
- 4) June, July and August 2018: "Updates on the New Zealand National Risk Report" [document IDs 4057532, 4068687 and 4067533]*
- 5) August 2018: "Aide-Memoire: Ministerial meeting on New Zealand National Risk Report" [document ID 4077370]*
- 6) December 2018: "Managing National Security Risks" [document ID 4101239]*
- 7) January 2019: "Benefits of a publicly available national risk report" [1819NSPD/070]*
- 8) Any other briefings, dated since February this year, that deal with the topic of the National Risk Register"*

After discussions with the Office of the Ombudsman, in relation to the investigation of your complaint about DPMC withholding information, we advised of our intention to reassess these for release. We have reassessed the documents and decided the information you have requested will be provided to you, subject to some information being withheld. Following extensive consultations, we have now completed a further assessment and can release the documents to you. I apologise for the delay in finalising the release of these documents to you and regret we were not able to meet our anticipated timeframe. This was for the most part due to the large amount of information to be reassessed and prepared for release and the number of agencies and Ministers that needed to be consulted before a final decision was made.

Please find attached the requested documents as set on in the table below:

Doc No	Title	Comment and withholding grounds
Doc 01	November 2017: "Improving the management of nationally significant risks"	Sections: 6(a) 9(2)(a)
Doc 02	December 2017: "National Risk Register 2018"	Section: 9(2)(a)
Doc 03	April 2018: "Cover-note in explanation of attached National Risk items"	<i>No redactions.</i> Pg 28, Para 3. Note –Draft National Risk Report 2018 is available on the DPMC website at: dPMC.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2022-12/oia-2020-21-0511-draft-national-risk-report.pdf .
Doc 04	June, July and August 2018: "Updates on the New Zealand National Risk Report"	Pg 84, Attachment B: Note –Draft National Risk Report 2018 is available on the DPMC website at: dPMC.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2022-12/oia-2020-21-0511-draft-national-risk-report.pdf . Pg 84, Attachment C: Withheld in full under 9(2)(g)(i). Sections: 9(2)(a) 9(2)(ba) 9(2)(f)(iv) 9(2)(g)(i)
Doc 05	August 2018: "Aide-Memoire: Ministerial meeting on New Zealand National Risk Report"	Section: 9(2)(g)(i)
Doc 06	December 2018: "Managing National Security Risks"	Sections: 6(a) 9(2)(a) 9(2)(f)(iv)
Doc 07	January 2019: "Benefits of a publicly available national risk report"	Sections: 9(2)(a) 9(2)(g)(i)
Doc 08	August 2021 "Public Risk Report Plan & Opportunities to Advance the Public Conversation" within the scope of the request.	Sections: 9(2)(a) 9(2)(g)(i) Attachment B 'Risk Report Talking Points' Withheld in full under 9(2)(g)(i).

Doc No	Title	Comment and withholding grounds
Doc 09	Summary of risk profile details including “title, risk-coordinating agency, date the current profile was issued, the profile security classification” (as at July 2023).	<i>No redactions.</i>

As noted in the table above, and in the documents themselves, some information continues to be withheld under the following sections of the Act:

- section 6(a), to protect the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand
- section 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of individuals
- section 9(2)(ba), to protect the supply of similar information in the future
- section 9(2)(f)(iv), to maintain the confidentiality of advice tendered by or to Ministers and officials
- section 9(2)(g)(i), to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion

Document 04 Attachment C “Communications Plan” and Document 08 Attachment B “Risk Report Talking Points” are withheld in full under s 9(2)(g)(i).

Set out below is some important context on the release of information relating to the National Risk Register and the development of a now historical draft 2018 document entitled the ‘National Risk Report’. Also provided is information and links to more current information on New Zealand’s nationally significant risks.

The National Risk Register

The government has a National Risk Register – a tool that can help us build resilience to nationally significant risks in a proactive and coordinated way. Government agencies work together to anticipate, prepare for, and mitigate risks. Our assessment of risks on the National Risk Register is constantly evolving.

Much of the information released as part of this request on the National Risk Register is now several years old and is out-of-date. It should not be assumed to reflect government’s current views, as the content of these briefings and attachments predate recent events that have further shaped our understanding of the risks we face.

We recently published information about the National Risk Register on our website to increase transparency and public awareness of the range of nationally significant risks we face: dpmc.govt.nz/our-programmes/national-security/national-risk-approach-0.

The Draft National Risk Report 2018

The briefings included for release illustrate the iterative process taken by officials to develop the ‘National Risk Report’, a historical draft document from 2018. The purpose of the report was to provide information on many of the risks on the National Risk Register, and outline some of the ways government was working to mitigate these at the time. The DPMC coordinated the production of this report, with input from several government agencies and stakeholders. The draft report was provided to Ministers for consideration, but ultimately did not progress beyond a draft stage and was never formally endorsed or lodged to Cabinet for approval to release.

This draft is now considerably out-of-date and does not represent the government's assessment of the current risk landscape, particularly given recent significant domestic and global events such as the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain on 15 March 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's invasion of Ukraine and severe weather events, including Cyclone Gabrielle earlier this year.

The Draft National Risk Report 2018 was published on the DPMC website in December 2022 in response to an Official Information Act request. You can read the Draft National Risk Report 2018 here: dpmc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2022-12/oia-2020-21-0511-draft-national-risk-report.pdf

Opportunities to communicate publicly on nationally significant risks

We are committed to increasing engagement with New Zealanders on nationally significant risks and to being more transparent on matters of national security. This is in line with the findings of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain on 15 March 2019.

The option to develop a National Risk Report was considered in 2021, however this was superseded by the development of the National Security Long Term Insights Briefing entitled '*Let's talk about our national security: Engaging an increasingly diverse Aotearoa New Zealand on national security risks, challenges and opportunities*'. This briefing shares information on some of the most significant threats and risks New Zealand could face over the next 10 - 15 years, and outlines work currently underway to prepare. We consider this a valuable source of information on some of the nationally significant risks we face, and you can find out more and read this briefing on the DPMC website at: dpmc.govt.nz/our-programmes/national-security/national-security-long-term-insights-briefing.

I remind you that you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

This revised response will be published on DPMC's website, your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

Yours sincerely



Dan Eaton
**Acting Deputy Chief Executive
National Security Group**

Enc: Requested Documents relating to the National Risk Register
Cc: Office of the Ombudsman
Ombudsman reference: 571551