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Ref: PMO 2023-297

Tēnā koe Ben

Official Information Act request relating to costs to have a second Air Force plane wait in Manila on stand by

Thank you for your request made under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), received on 28 June 2023. You requested:

"I hope this message finds you well. I recently came across information regarding your recent visit to China, where a second air force plane was required to wait in Manila on standby in case the one you were traveling in experienced any issues. I am currently awaiting confirmation from the Ministry of Defence regarding the exact costs associated with this trip. However, based on an online tool I used to calculate fuel, airport fees, storage, and other expenses, it has come to my attention that it may have been more economically responsible to lease a private charter instead of deploying two jets to Asia.

This situation prompted me to reflect upon the government's Ute tax policy, which is focused on climate change and emission reduction. As a tradesman who relies on a vehicle capable of carrying heavy workloads, it is disheartening to see how we are impacted by these policies while witnessing the government contributing double the required emissions for this trip through the use of two jets. I won't delve into the embarrassment of needing two jets in case of a breakdown, but I am curious to know the decision-making process behind such choices, the financial implications for taxpayers during a time of recession, and why there seems to be a double standard regarding carbon emissions. It is disappointing that alternative, more cost-effective solutions with significantly reduced carbon footprints are not considered by the government.

In light of this, I have a few additional questions regarding the trip:

- 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?**
- 4. How does this particular trip align with the government's overall strategy for reducing carbon emissions and addressing climate change? Are there specific considerations or exceptions for official government travel?**
- 5. Is there an established framework or set of guidelines that governs the decision-making process for official government travel, particularly when it comes**

to assessing cost-effectiveness and carbon footprint reduction?

I find it concerning that the citizens of New Zealand are facing the consequences of poor financial decisions made by our government, particularly in light of the double standards regarding carbon emissions. I understand that you have a demanding schedule, and I truly appreciate your time in responding to this message. If you are open to insights from someone who has firsthand experience in the real world and can offer practical solutions, I would be more than willing to provide you with valuable perspectives. It appears that no one in the Labour Party possesses the competence necessary for their roles, and instead, they seem to be career politicians lacking real-world experience."

I believe that parts 1, 2 and 3 of your request (**bolded**) are more closely connected to the functions of the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF). Accordingly, I have decided to transfer these parts of your request to NZDF under section 14(b)(ii) of the Act. The other parts of your request have not been transferred, and I will respond in due course.

Please note that the Office of the Prime Minister will also respond to any information it holds in relation to part 3 of your request.

NZDF has the usual time limits from receipt of this transfer to make a decision on your request.

Ngā mihi nui



Andrew Kirton 
Chief of Staff