



14/05/2019

Ref: DOIA 1819-1495

Bonnie McGregor

Email: fyi-request-10107-28fd6afe@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms McGregor

Thank you for your enquiry of 14/04/2019 to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) requesting under the Official Information Act 1982 the following information related to DARPA satellites:

“Do the satellites have 5g capabilities? Are we monitoring them? Have they been tested, or are they going to be tested on us?”

DARPA’s R3D2 Satellite

On March 29, Rocket Lab launched the R3D2 satellite for the US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) from Rocket Lab’s facility on the Mahia Peninsula. DARPA has provided information about the functions of this satellite at: <https://www.darpa.mil/news-events/2019-01-22b>

Satellites launched from New Zealand must be approved by the Minister for Economic Development having regard to the tests in the Outer Space and High-altitude Activities Act 2017 which include safety, international obligations, national security and national interest.

Do the satellites have 5g capabilities?

No – standards for 5G communication incorporate ground-based networks only and do not currently include satellite communications.

Are we monitoring them?

MBIE was notified of the details of the satellite’s orbit following its launch. DARPA are required to report any incidents or accidents involving the R3D2 satellite as a condition of their payload permit. In addition, space objects are required to be registered with the United Nations Office of Outer Space Affairs.

Have they been tested, or are they going to be tested on us?

The satellite will not communicate with ground stations in New Zealand as DARPA does not hold a New Zealand radio licence.

I trust you find the information helpful. You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Johnson
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