

OIA-2013-1944

9 September 2013

Mr Alex Harris

fyi-request-1049-9ebf7951@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Harris

I refer to your email of 5 August 2013 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), the following information:

- *How did NZDF learn of Mr Hussey's tweet? (e.g. were you contacted by a concerned member of the public, by another government agency, by a foreign government, or does NZDF monitor twitter?) I would like all documents and reports into the incident.*
- *More generally: does NZDF monitor twitter and other public forums on the internet (e.g. Trademe, blogs, public Google groups, public boards)? If so, how, and for what?*

Like many organisations the NZDF has media and communications alerts for when the NZDF or keywords related to its activities are mentioned in online media.

In the case of Mr Hussey, he was working in Bamiyan Province, Afghanistan, in August 2012, when he overheard a conversation during which an unfolding incident involving New Zealand casualties was spoken about. Mr Hussey subsequently used the information he overheard to publicly tweet about the incident as it was still unfolding.

Twitter is a public forum and any member of the public is able to see information posted there. This is how the NZDF was made aware of the details of Mr Hussey's tweet – not through any monitoring of him or his communications, as Mr Hussey suggests.

Mr Hussey was asked to remove the tweet, and was advised that he was no longer welcome at Kiwi Base as a result of his actions. The NZDF feels that it has a legitimate interest in ensuring that the families of its service men and women who are placed in harms way are not needlessly distressed by premature or incomplete reports based on overheard conversations.

Your request for documents and reports is therefore refused under section 18(e) of the OIA as the information you have requested does not exist. Under section 18B of the OIA I do not consider that consulting with you will remove the reason for this refusal.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review my response to your request.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R.R. Jones', with a stylized, cursive script.

R.R. JONES
Lieutenant General
Chief of Defence Force