



19-E-0449
DOC-6014525

25 July 2019

K Lane
fyi-request-10674-2a8c07b5@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear K Lane

This letter is in reply to your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request to the Department of Conservation (DOC) of 4 July 2019.

Context

Until the middle of last year, when the nature and volume of incidents changed, DOC staff and others involved with the Department did not routinely record incidents of threats, harassment and abuse. While we had some anecdotal knowledge that these were occurring, these incidents had become normalised as part of the work. Any incidents that were reported locally may not have been escalated within DOC or to Police. There was no centralised recording of these events until a new logging system was put in place for 2019.

DOC's landscape scale pest control programme drives a large proportion of anti-DOC sentiment and activity. However, our staff and contractors are subjected to threats, harassment and abuse for the other activities that DOC undertakes in the course of our work, including, for example, concession compliance, whitebait control and campground fees.

DOC encourages every New Zealander to be actively engaged in conservation. We respect the right of individuals and groups to discuss the issues that are important to them and us, and the right to exercise freedom of speech and peaceful protest. However, we also take the health and safety of our staff and others undertaking conservation work very seriously and have a zero tolerance to actions which threaten harm or endanger them.

Response

In response to your OIA request:

Department of Conservation *Te Papa Atawhai*
Whare Kaupapa Atawhai / Conservation House
PO Box 10420, Wellington 6143,
www.doc.govt.nz

Stuff reported on 2 July 2019 that 69 threats were recorded to DOC staff between Oct 2017 and May 2019.

1) How many of these 69 were specifically related to 1080?

As outlined above, DOC believes threats were under-reported before 2019. DOC does not therefore have accurate data on all threat incidents from 2017 to 2018.

Notwithstanding these data limitations, information available shows 69 reported threats from October 2017 to May 2019. 45 of these threats are recorded as being related to 1080. 14 reported threats related to 1080 were recorded in 2019.

2) What was the nature of each of those 1080 related threats i.e. what form did they take e.g. Facebook comment, letter written, verbal abuse, physical abuse) how many of each?

Facebook comments: 38

Letter written: 1

Verbal abuse: 6

Physical abuse: 0

3) Have any of these cases been referred to police? How many and which ones?

Yes. Please note that incidents may be referred to Police or Netsafe (under the criminal or civil arm of the Harmful Digital Communications Act 2015).

Incidents reported are not restricted to threats, and will include abuse, harassment or comments that breach social media community standards.

Number of items referred to Police: 15

Details: Provided as comments

- A letter detailing threats to Taranaki DOC staff was received at the New Plymouth office in retaliation to the use of 1080 poison.
- "Choppers shot out the sky is gunna fuckn happen"
- Interaction with member of the public which resulted in abuse and threats to kill.
- Feedback to promotion of an engagement session: "Fuck 1080 on Maori Land or on any land in NZ...Shoot those helicopters out Stop 1080 Drops."
- Comment to shoot helicopters down with automatic weapons
- Harassment of security guards involved in 1080 operations.
- Social media comment relating to contractor activity at Hokitika airport: "Shoot the bastards down"
- Social media threat: "Next goon out will be the one the cops can't find"
- Social media comment: "Fucking wankers id shoot the cunts".

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- Social media comment regarding burning down a 1080 storage shed. "Time to burn that shit down but I didn't say it".
- Social media comments to shoot helicopters down.
- Social media comment regarding helicopters: "Shoot them"
- Social media comments to burn a bait store.
- Social media discussions about the use of drones at 1080 operations, which would pose a significant safety risk.
- Social media comments regarding helicopter operations:
"Shoot it down" and "Hopefully some legendary hero shoots them down".

With regard to reports in the media in 2018 that a DOC worker had had his wheel nuts loosened by an anti-1080 person:

There were two wheel nut incidents recorded by DOC in 2017, however these incidents are not recorded as being specifically related to 1080.

4) Was the vehicle in question a private vehicle or a DOC vehicle?

One was a DOC vehicle and one was a private vehicle.

5) Did the vehicle have DOC markings or logos on it?

The DOC vehicle was marked.

6) Was the vehicle being driven by a person employed by DOC at the time of the incident?

Yes.

7) What evidence was there to suggest that it was a 1080 protestor that loosened the wheel nuts?

This information is not recorded in our systems and therefore is unable to be provided.

8) Had the vehicle recently been for a wheel alignment?

This information is not recorded in our systems and therefore is unable to be provided.

9) Was there a police report into the incident? If so, please provide copy if held by you?

The matters were referred to Police. DOC do not hold a copy of any resulting Police report/s.

10) Was there a DOC incident report? If so, please provide copy.

These events predated our current incident logging system, however the two events were entered into our risk manager system, and copies of the two event logs are attached in Appendix One. Please note information has been redacted from these records to protect individual privacy.

11) Was there an insurance claim made on the damage to this vehicle? If so, please provide copy.

No. Insurance claims were not made as there was no damage to the vehicles.

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While I have provided answers to your questions above, please note I am withholding some details of the incidents under section 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of natural persons. In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Official Information Act. It is vitally important that DOC staff are able to operate in a safe environment.

You are entitled to seek a review of my decision by writing to an Ombudsman pursuant to section 28(3) Official Information Act.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Karen Jones', written in a cursive style.

Karen Jones
Deputy Director General, People and Engagement
Department of Conservation

Appendix One

Extracts from Risk Manager. Typos and grammatical errors are unaltered as part of transcript

- Incident Summary transcript 1

Incident Summary: 797099 – Missing Wheel nuts

Status: Closed

Details

Reporting Line: Operations: Ops HWT Region: Hauraki

Location: Tahuna

Type: -

Date: Time 04 Sep 2017: 3:00PM

Categories -

Risk Rating 3. Medium

Secondary Risk Classification Safety: Harassment/Threat: External Harassment

Injured or Key Person NAME REDACTED

Manager managing the Incident NAME REDACTED

Other People Involved NAME REDACTED (Hauraki)

Description

I picked up a vehicle and headed towards NAME REDACTED House early Monday morning. I did my pre start checks in the yard. I picked up NAME REDACTED and We drove to Hamilton. In the afternoon We drove to NAME REDACTED house to drop him off before heading back to Hauraki. NAME REDACTED bent down to un tie his dog and noticed the two wheel nuts missing. We substituted the nuts for some NAME REDACTED had at his house for the correct size before I drove back to Thames. Before I left NAME REDACTED house We checked the other wheel nuts on the vehicle. All but one wheel had loose nuts

Immediate Corrective Action Taken

Fit wheel nuts check all wheel nuts where tight

Investigation

Investigation Leader NAME REDACTED

Date Completed 25 Oct 17

Estimation of Cost/Loss

Start Date: 25 Oct 17

Description of Findings

No further internal investigation will be undertaken as this matter has been reported to the police as a suspected act of vandalism. Police have an open file for this and related incidents

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Close Reason / Comments No further outstanding action apart from ongoing vigilance

Corrective Actions -

Notes & Documents Link -

Injured Persons – No Injured persons

Contributory Factors -

- Incident Summary transcript 2

Incident Summary: 799096 – Missing Wheel Nuts, 2nd Incident 2017

Status: Closed

Details

Reporting Line: Operations: Ops HWT Region: Hauraki

Location: Thames

Type: -

Date: Time 11 Sep 2017: 5:30PM

Categories -

Risk Rating 3. Medium

Secondary Risk Classification Safety: Harassment/Threat: External Harassment

Injured or Key Person NAME REDACTED

Manager managing the Incident NAME REDACTED

Other People Involved NAME REDACTED (Hauraki)

Description

NAME REDACTED arrived home and noticed a wheel nut missing on REDACTED private vehicle, on the rear drivers side. On checking REDACTED found 2 others loose on the same rear wheel, and 4 out of 5 the nut stud pattern loose on both front wheels. 11 of 20 wheel nuts were all loose enough to turn with fingers.

Immediate Corrective Action Taken

Tightened wheel nuts. Informed staff with cars parked in the same area to check their cars.

Following day: Updated police, called immediate staff meeting to inform staff & increase awareness. Re-checked all departmental vehicles with calibrated torque wrench.

Marked all wheel nuts with a paint indicator seal to identify movement

Investigation

Investigation Leader

Date Completed

Estimation of Cost/Loss

Start Date: 15 May 18

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Description of Findings

Close Reason / Comments No further outstanding action apart from ongoing vigilance

Corrective Actions -

Notes & Documents Link

Notes

7977099 – Missing Wheel nuts

Link to 1st incident of missing / loose wheel nuts: 5 Sept 2017

Time Stamp

12 Sep 2017

09:36AM

NAME REDACTED

Injured Persons – No Injured persons

Contributory Factors -

Hazards linked to this Event -

- Privacy insert

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