



Allen Reynolds

fyi-request-12332-c3c14876@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Allen Reynolds

I refer to your request dated 28 February 2020, pursuant to the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), seeking:

- *“Does the Ministry of Transport have numbers for various types of RPAS? Including, but not limited to – gliders, powered fixed wing aircraft, helicopters, multirotors, others*
- *Does the Ministry of Transport have numbers for various size categories of RPAS? by weight, by dimension, by other measure(s)*
- *Does the Ministry of Transport have numbers for various use categories of RPAS?*
- *Does the Ministry of Transport have numbers for the location(s) of RPAS? by Island, by region, by city/town, by other geographic division*
- *If the MOT has any of these numbers, what are they? Is there also an online site the numbers can be accessed?*
- *If the MOT does not have these numbers, does it plan to begin gathering them?*
- *Does any other government agency have any numbers, or plan to begin gathering them, for RPAS, for RPAS types, and/or for RPAS size categories”*

For the purposes of this reply, I will concentrate specifically on drones. For clarification, drones is the general term used by the Ministry of Transport (the Ministry) when referring to aircraft which operate without an on-board pilot. We appreciate that in some cases terms such as Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) or Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) may be more technically correct. However, as a significant portion of our work is public facing, we prefer to use terms which are widely understood and recognised by a wide range of stakeholders, including people without a technical interest or experience in aviation.

With the above in mind, I would like to confirm that the Ministry does not maintain active records of the number of drones in New Zealand, and is currently unable to provide breakdowns by type, use, location, size, or dimensions.

In regards to the number of gliders, powered fixed wing aircraft, helicopters, and other aircraft, I recommend that you contact the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) directly with a request for that information. You may also find some of the information on the CAA's online Aircraft register:

<https://www.aviation.govt.nz/aircraft/aircraft-registration/aircraft-register-search/>

While we do not have active records of drone numbers, in 2017, the Ministry, along with the CAA, Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment (MBIE), and Airways commissioned a survey of drone users in New Zealand. The survey indicated that:

approximately 281,428 New Zealanders aged over 18 years old own or fly a drone. Further, the survey indicated that approximately 11% of households own one or more drones.

In 2018, the Ministry and MBIE jointly commissioned the *Drone Benefit Study*. As part of this study, we asked the researchers to evaluate the previous survey results, and to determine whether any further assessments can be made about drone numbers in New Zealand. This investigation led to an estimate of 77,600 drones in New Zealand in 2017, or approximately 106 drones per 10,000 New Zealanders. You can read the full Drone Benefit Study report at:

<https://www.transport.govt.nz/air/unmanned-aircraft-systems-or-drones/drone-benefit-study/>

In 2019, a further survey of drone users was commissioned by CAA, the Ministry, and MBIE. This survey is intended to be more detailed than the previous version, and should provide much more robust estimates on the number of drones and drone users in New Zealand. This survey should also provide insights into locations and types of drones currently in use. We anticipate that the final report will be released within the next two months, and will be published on our website.

While we do not have any documents which fall under the scope of your request, I am attaching the *RPAS Use in New Zealand* report, as it pertains to your request.

The Ministry publishes our Official Information Act responses and the information contained in our reply to you will be published on the Ministry website. Before publishing we will remove any personal or identifiable information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Cross', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Richard Cross
Manager, Strategic Policy and Innovation