



15 July 2021

Sebastian

By email: fyi-request-15138-2112bc5b@requests.fyi.org.nz

Ref: OIA-2020/21-0676

Dear Sebastian

Official Information Act request for documents relating to Counter-Terrorism and the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Terrorist Attack on Christchurch Mosques

Thank you for your request made under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), received by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) on 17 June 2021. You requested:

“...I would like to renew my request for a copy of the Counter-Terrorism Handbook. For clarity, my request is for the document referred to in the CT/CVE Capability Review as “Counter-Terrorism Handbook, DPMC, October 2019, RESTRICTED,” as opposed to the unclassified one-page summary that is accessible on the DPMC website.

Further, the Counter-Terrorism Strategy Implementation Plan 2020 refers to “policy and operational frameworks” for managing New Zealand foreign terrorist fighters and their repatriation. I request copies of these frameworks.

I would also like to request copies of these documents referred to in the Royal Commission report:

ONE: *“In June 2019, the CTCC agreed that information access and sharing were vital to understanding the threat. It suggested removing legislative barriers, leveraging open-source intelligence capability, developing online platforms for agencies to collaborate and enhancing information sharing mechanisms between Public sector agencies and selected private organisations.”*

I request a copy of this report

TWO: *“A 20 June 2019 report to the Security and Intelligence Board noted that work had not yet commenced on measuring or assessing its own governance and coordination performance...”*

I request a copy of this report, if it is different to the June 2019 report referred to above.

THREE: *“In July 2016, the Security and Intelligence Board recognised the “urgent need for agencies to [sort out] New Zealand’s counter-terrorism arrangements in line with ministerial expectations” and noted the continuing absence of an overarching strategy for counter-terrorism.”*

I request a copy of the document containing these observations.

FOUR: *“In 2017, [DPMC]... advised the Security and Intelligence Board that there were still no measures to demonstrate impact. It noted that one of the factors “stopping intelligence and assessment about the national intelligence priorities from informing decision-making and policy-making to the fullest extent” was that “current priority descriptions are not clear enough...”*

I request a copy of the document containing these observations.

FIVE: *"The last national-level counter-terrorism exercise before the 15 March 2019 terrorist attack was in 2014. Comprehensive evaluation reports are prepared after each exercise, which include lessons identified and corrective action plans to address those."*

I request a copy of the evaluation report and corrective action plan for the national-level counter-terrorism exercise conducted in 2014.

SIX: *"In 2016, the Security and Intelligence Board was told that a CT operation identified that "the system overall appears under-prepared to facilitate effectively the sharing of highly sensitive, [compartmented] intelligence to those who need it, when they need it". The CTCC was asked to address this, along with other matters identified in a corrective action plan following that operation."*

I request a copy of the report to the Security Intelligence Board that contains these observations. I also request a copy of this operation's corrective action plan.

SEVEN: *"In mid-2018 the Specialist Coordinator... directed a National Assessments Bureau analyst to conduct a stocktake of Public sector agencies' online activity to counter extremism."*

I request a copy of this stocktake..."

With regard to the part of your request for the restricted version of the "Counter-Terrorism Handbook", I note you have previously been provided with a copy of the publicly available summary version on page 3 of the following link: dpmc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2020-02/2019-20%20CT%20Strategy-all-final.pdf. I have decided to partially release the restricted version, however the majority of this Handbook needs to be withheld under section 6(a) of the Act, as the making available of that information would be likely to prejudice the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand. Please find the releasable parts of this document enclosed. It is similarly necessary to withhold the part of your request for *"policy and operational frameworks" for managing New Zealand foreign terrorist fighters and their repatriation* under section 6(a) of the Act, in full.

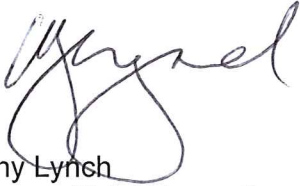
With regard to part four of your request, for a copy of the document to the Security and Intelligence Board (SIB) that noted *"one of the factors "stopping intelligence and assessment about the national intelligence priorities from informing decision-making and policy-making to the fullest extent" was that "current priority descriptions are not clear enough"*, it is necessary to withhold this document under section 6(a) of the Act. For some context however, I can advise that the paper to SIB preceded a review of intelligence priorities and highlighted areas of focus for the review. You may be interested to know that some further information about National Security and Intelligence Priorities can be found online at: <https://dpmc.govt.nz/our-programmes/national-security-and-intelligence/national-security-and-intelligence-priorities>.

With regard to parts five and six of your request, for *"a copy of the evaluation report and corrective action plan for the national-level counter-terrorism exercise conducted in 2014"*, *"a copy of the report to the Security Intelligence Board"* and *"this operation's corrective action plan"*, it is also necessary to withhold this information in full under section 6(a) of the Act.

Work remains underway on parts numbered one, two, three, and seven of your request. I have decided under section 15A of the Act to extend the time limits for deciding on the remainder of your request by an additional 20 working days. Consequently, the extended due date will be 12 August 2021. The extension is required because further consultations are needed in order to make a decision on these parts. Despite this, a response regarding them will be sent to you as soon as possible.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Lynch', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Tony Lynch
**Deputy Chief Executive
National Security Group**

