

18 August 2022

IR-01-22-19465

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Tēnā koe Gaye

Request for information

Thank you for your request of 16 May 2022 to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and subsequently transferred to Police, in which you requested the following:

A clarification of the original request (IR-01-22-13084) was referred to Police by MBIE on 24/05/2022 - the amended question was missed and still needs a response - outstanding question relates to Q1 of original request:

1. Has the use of EMF been authorised for use in NZ?

***Clarification of question still to be responded to: "The form I'm after is the form used for crowd control. LRAD and AHAD, both high to low frequency EMF."*

Original request transferred to Police by DPMC (has been responded to on 31/05/2022).

I am seeking information relating to use of EMF in New Zealand:

1. Has the use of EMF been authorised for use in NZ?

2. Was EMF used during the protest in Wellington?

3. If used, for what duration was it used, and who authorised it?

Please accept my apologies for the miscommunication between Police and MBIE which delayed this response.

Your request has been considered in accordance with the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), and I can now provide the following response.

As requested, we have interpreted your request for information as relating to Long-Range Acoustic Devices (LRADs). Police does not have any knowledge or use of AHAD, but an internet search indicates it stands for Acoustic Hailing and Disruption and this appears to be an alternative name for LRAD.

LRAD is a long-distance communication device that was purchased to support Police Negotiation Teams (PNTs). It is a hand portable device that allows staff to broadcast voice messages over background noise and over long distances (up to 600 metres). It broadcasts directional sound for targeted communication. Voice broadcasts using LRAD can penetrate buildings and vehicles to ensure any warnings or commands from Police are clearly heard and understood.

PNT can use LRAD in situations to negotiate with barricaded subjects or in crisis intervention. This allows subjects to have the time and space to understand their options and make their own decisions without the pressure of someone being near them. The device can also be used in situations where regular communication means are not accessible, such as search and rescue, civil defence emergencies, or disaster management (eg, tsunami, earthquake extractions).

Police purchased these devices to be used primarily in the above-described situations as an option to communicate with subjects, to avoid more serious interventions, such as breach and use of force, or where the subject cannot be easily located (such as in search and rescue situations).

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LRAD also has an "alert/aversion tone" feature, which produces a short burst of intense sound and can be used in urgent situations as a warning.

As you may be aware, the Independent Police Conduct Authority (IPCA) has commenced an independent investigation and review (Review) of the policing of the occupation on and around Parliament grounds in Wellington during February and March 2022 (Protest).

Details of the scope of the Review are available on the IPCA's website¹ and you will note this scope includes Police planning and preparation of its response to the Protest equipment provided to officers who policed the Protest. It also includes Police command and control, decision-making processes, and operational execution (including tactics used and timeliness of tactics).

Whilst this Review is underway, information relating to the issues under investigation and review is expected to be the subject of examination by the IPCA under its powers of investigation under the IPCA Act 1988. With this Review commenced, there is a strong public interest in allowing these matters to be considered in the round by the IPCA.

We consider the following information can be made available.

1. Has the use of [LRADs] been authorised for use in NZ?

LRADs are not prohibited in New Zealand, and the purchase and use of LRADs by the PNTs is authorised by Police. Police have 17 LRAD units which have been incrementally purchased since 2016.

2. Was [LRADs] used during the protest in Wellington?

3. If used, for what duration was it used, and who authorised it?

Two LRAD units were deployed at the Protest on 2 March 2022 to first communicate that a street was closed and to ask people to keep back from the Police line. Subsequently, the alert tone was also used. One unit was deployed in Aitken Street, the other on the roof of Parliament building.

All deployment decisions of LRAD are made by PNT Commanders on a case-by-case basis. Only Police Negotiators who have been trained and qualified in the use of LRAD may use the device.

The IPCA anticipates the Review will be completed and reported on by 31 March 2023. Police recognises the importance of transparency in these matters and looks forward to the release of the IPCA's report, at which time more detailed information regarding the Police response to the Protest is likely to be publicly available.

Please note that as part of its commitment to openness and transparency, Police proactively releases some information and documents that may be of interest to the public. An anonymised version of this response may be publicly released on the New Zealand Police website.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision if you are not satisfied with the response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Nāku noa, nā



David Greig
Superintendent
New Zealand Police

¹ <https://www.ipca.govt.nz/Site/publications-and-media/2022-media-releases/2022-mar-24-investigation-review-occupation-parliament.aspx>