

24 July 2018

Ref: AGR/17-18/03

Alex Harris
fyi-request-8057-54aa9ba4@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Alex

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your Official Information Act request dated 19 June 2018 for:

“all information relating to, or provided by, Thompson and Clark Private Investigations between the years 2014-2018 held by your agency.”

On 13 July, the timeframe for making a decision on your request was extended by a further 5 working days to allow necessary external consultation on the material relevant to your request to be completed (pursuant to section 15A(b) of the Act).

During the timeframe of your request, AgResearch engaged the services of Thompson and Clark to supply risk management reporting on animal rights and GE-related issues. AgResearch initially subscribed to this reporting service because it had previously been the target of vandalism by activists.

The risk management reporting provided by Thompson and Clark to AgResearch included a media scan, and other reports. These other reports provided by Thompson and Clark were in the form of a written narrative, based on information obtained from, as we understand it, a wide range of open and publicly available information, about the activities or planned activities of animal rights and/or anti-GE groups so that we could prepare for any possible threats against our property accordingly. For clarity, I can confirm that at no time during our engagement with Thompson and Clark did AgResearch authorise or request it to carry out any surveillance on its behalf.

AgResearch ceased using Thompson and Clark’s risk management reporting services in April 2016. The service was cancelled following an internal review that found security risk levels at the time had reduced to the point that the service was no longer required. During the period covered by your request, the subscription fee paid by AgResearch to Thompson and Clark for the regular reporting was \$2,200 (excluding GST) per month.

Information to be released

Please find below the information that is being released to you in full or part, as described in the table.

This information covers correspondence that relates to the ceasing of our engagement with Thompson and Clark, and correspondence received from the company outside of regular reports. The reports received during 2014-16 are discussed in the section immediately following the table.

Doc no.	Date	Document description/title	Withholding ground/s
1	23/10/15	Email: Thompson + Clark Update – GE Free report on GE Animals – Morning Report <i>Names, positions and contact details withheld as appropriate.</i>	9(2)(a)
2	23/10/15	Email: Green Party Press Release – publication of GE Animals report <i>Names, positions and contact details withheld as appropriate.</i>	9(2)(a)
3	23/10/15	Email: GE Free NZ press release <i>Names, positions and contact details withheld as appropriate.</i>	9(2)(a)
4	28/10/15	Email: GE Free NZ Report: G E Animals: The First Fifteen Years <i>Names, positions and contact details withheld as appropriate.</i> <i>Please note that the attachment to this email is publicly available at this link: https://www.gefree.org.nz/assets/pdf/GE-Animals-in-New-Zealand.pdf</i>	9(2)(a)
5	10/11/15	Email trail: For the Attention of Nick Daniels <i>Names, positions and contact details withheld as appropriate.</i> <i>Note page 3 onward (which is the Situation Report referred to in the email) is withheld.</i>	9(2)(a) 9(2)(b)(ii) 9(2)(ba)(i)
6	16/12/15	Email: Thompson + Clark Update Campaign re lab dogs	9(2)(a)
7	18/12/15	Email trail: FW Security Policy <i>Names, positions and contact details withheld as appropriate.</i> <i>The attachment to this email is withheld under 9(2)(b)(ii).</i>	9(2)(a) 9(2)(ba)(i) 9(2)(b)(ii)
8	11/4/16	Email trail: Cancellation of Thompson + Clark security policy <i>Names, positions and contact details withheld as appropriate.</i>	9(2)(a) 9(2)(ba)(i) 9(2)(b)(ii)
9	11/4/16	Email trail: FW Cancellation of Thompson + Clark security policy <i>Names, positions and contact details withheld as appropriate.</i>	9(2)(a) 9(2)(ba)(i) 9(2)(b)(ii)
10	11/4/16	Email trail: RE: Cancellation of Thompson + Clark security policy <i>Names, positions and contact details withheld as appropriate.</i>	9(2)(a) 9(2)(ba)(i) 9(2)(b)(ii)
11	11/4/16	Email trail: RE: Cancellation of Thompson + Clark security policy <i>Names, positions and contact details withheld as appropriate.</i> <i>Note the attachment to this email is the same as that to Document 7, and is withheld under the same grounds.</i>	9(2)(a) 9(2)(ba)(i) 9(2)(b)(ii)

Information to be withheld

While I have decided to release the correspondence listed above, I have decided to withhold in full a February 2014 Domestic Activism and Protest Review of Events report and each of the Situation Reports received during 2014 and until April 2016 under sections 9(2)(ba)(i) and 9(2)(b)(ii) of the Act. These reports were provided on a confidential basis, contain proprietary information, and if released would be likely to unreasonably prejudice the commercial position of the supplier.

In making my decision on your request, I have carefully considered the public interest test in section 9(1) of the Act. While I have concluded that any public interest in favour of releasing the withheld information does not outweigh the grounds for withholding, I consider that the detailed contextual information provided in this response about our engagement of Thompson and Clark's services during 2014-2016 would satisfy any public interest that may be perceived to exist about that information.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of my decision on your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Yours sincerely



Monique Devereux
Communications and Marketing Director
AgResearch Limited