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OIA-2023-4749

3 August 2023

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@nzme.co.nz

Dear [REDACTED],

I refer to your email of 7 June 2023 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), the following information:

- *All internal minutes issued this year to date regarding the Seasprite helicopters.*
- *The flight hours of each of the eight Seasprite helicopters this year to date, broken down by helicopter.*
- *All internal minutes issued this year to date regarding the NH-90 helicopters. The flight hours of each of the NH-90 helicopters this year to date, broken down by helicopter.*

On 8 June 2023, you revised your request to the following:

- *All internal minutes issued this year to date regarding the Seasprite helicopters, specifically their ongoing sustainability;*
- *All internal minutes issued this year to date regarding the capability augmentation options being explored for the Seasprite helicopters;*
- *The flight hours of each of the eight Seasprite helicopters this year to date, broken down by helicopter.*
- *The flight hours of each of the NH-90 helicopters this year to date, broken down by helicopter.*

A response to the parts of your question about flight hours was provided to you on 5 July.

At Enclosure 1 are the minutes of the 6 April 2023 Seasprite Obsolescence Working Group meeting. Where indicated, the names of attendees and specific advice are withheld in accordance with section 9(2)(g)(i) of the OIA to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion. Information concerning capability is withheld under section 6(a) of the OIA. No further internal minutes have been created this year regarding the sustainability or capability augmentation options for the Seasprite helicopters.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website, with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely

**AJ WOODS**

Air Commodore

Chief of Staff HQNZDF

**Enclosure:**

1. Seasprite Obsolescence Working Group minutes

**HEADQUARTERS NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCE**  
Capability Branch

6 Apr 23

CAP/PB8-0038/19

**SEASPRITE OBSOLESCENCE WORKING GROUP 6 APR 23 – MINUTES**

**Attendees**

LTCDR G Haywood – Naval Aviation Capability Manager

CDR A I Trotter – Commanding Officer 6SQN

s.9(2)(g)(i) – Cont AW Mgmt – Desk Officer NHF & P-3 (by MS Teams)

s.9(2)(g)(i) – Software Programme Manager

SQNLDR A J Kyle – Maintenance Flight Commander – 6SQN

s.9(2)(g)(i) – FC Flight Systems Flight – AVAK

s.9(2)(g)(i) – Staff Officer Seasprite 1

s.9(2)(g)(i) – Comp Ctrl Manager BOE/SEA – MSW

s.9(2)(g)(i) – Capability Sustainment Manager – MSW

s.9(2)(g)(i) – Capability Integration Manager Aerospace

**Agenda**

1. Meeting opened – Actions from previous meeting:
  - a. Update on state of LOOP relationship. – s.9(2)(g)(i) advised that the relationship is in a far better place than had been the case when Loop had written to CDF last year:
    - (1) OC AVSQN and Beca conducted a visit in Nov 22.
    - (2) Loop had been suffering from its own personnel challenges, now resolved.
    - (3) Loop is about to send proposal documentation for Milestone 2.
    - (4) s.9(2)(g)(i)
  
2. Précis of Seasprite Obsolescence Programme (SOPgm) – LTCDR Haywood reported:
  - a. Plan A remains 2028 PWD for the Seasprite, however, given the decision to not replace the radar, the warfighting & ISR capability would LIFEX much earlier and spending decisions would be made in that light. The missile remotoring would continue, with a firing to be programmed for Q1 2024.
  
  - b. s.6(a)

3. SOPgm Finance Update – s.9(2)(g)(i)
- a. SOPgm is continuing; but, the Naval Aviation Capability Board is reluctant to sign off on new initiatives, especially those that do not deliver before 2026.
  - b. Funds remaining total \$14M; the extra \$31M identified for the radar replacement has gone.
    - (1) Funding tension exists on CMFD: The plan had been to use 6 SQN to do installation, now having to use Airbus. This is an unfunded cost, having to go to AC CAP through NACB.
    - (2) Main generator also on our radar.
4. Top Obsolescence items – s.9(2)(g)
- a. AFCS. Six serviceable units, all fitted to aircraft; one spare. Forecast three units Q3 2023.
  - b. Main Generators. Fifteen Main Generators installed, four spares. One back from GE repair, maybe another this month before a lull in returns. Forecast six units (3 a/c) Q1 2025.
  - c. Oil Cooler Rotary Blower. No change: seven installed, nil spares, seven u/s. Forecast three units Q1 2026.
  - d. 200A Converter. Slight improvement: 15 fitted (2 per a/c), four serviceable spares. Forecast six units (3 a/c) Q4 2030. – **Review risk next SObsWG.**
  - e. CMFD. 28 CMFD installed in aircraft & FMFS; one spare; 20 u/s. Forecast three a/c Q4 2024.
  - f. Radar System. By components:
    - (1) Transmitter. Seven installed; six spare. Forecast three a/c Q1 2025.
    - (2) Signal Processor. Eight installed; one spare. Forecast three a/c Q2 2025.
    - (3) Antenna Pedestal. Slight improvement: Seven installed; seven spare. Forecast three a/c Q3 2027.
  - g. INS. No change: 16 installed, seven spare. Forecast three a/c Q3 2027.
  - h. Float Bladder. **New item**. 21 Installed, nil spares. SC SEA attempted to purchase a Float Bladder as one was being scrapped. OEM (GKN) stated they are obsolete; not manufactured for nearly 10 years. Tooling/supporting information no longer held. Furthermore, it has been found the Float Bladders have an 11 Year Discard Schedule from date first installed and 15 Year Discard from date of manufacture. Forecast three a/c Q1 2026 reducing to one a/c Q2 2026.

5. CMFD Project – s.9(2)(g)(i) Hardware complete; AIR MDO concerns on manpower resource for Certification. CMC late delivering final software build (received Dec 22) for DXC integration into ARCLIGHT. Installation Q1/2 2023, first fit aircraft test flight still Sep 2023.
6. Materiel Support Wing Update – s.9(2)(g)(i) Only just returned to NZ from deployment; will forward summary when compiled; previous notes recorded here:
  - a. FMFS. A CAE Obsolescence Report, building on the earlier work, is being funded.
  - b. Consumables. Procurement posture shifting from 'just in time' to 'just in case'.
  - c. Liquid Springs. We are forwarding our inventory to Kaman to speed up delivery to us. The alloy is unchanged, but the components have a new coating; two units are expected back in Feb 23.
  - d. APU Gen. Mod has been approved. Installation will commence with the next aircraft Phase service (3613).
  - e. Engines. NAVAIR pushing purchase of 14 Engines.
  - f. Relief. s.9(2)(g)(i) will be taking over in the New Year, but he will be maintaining an interest in all things Seasprite - from the MHR IPT.
7. 6SQN Update – s.9(2)(g)(i) Only two aircraft available, having overflown one aircraft. Vibro programme reaping dividends. Concerned about CMFD: three failed in last FF deployment. Personnel resourcing on 6 SQN may dictate further reduction in a/c availability/flying rates.
8. Command Concerns: Nil further.
9. Priority of top obsolescence risks – LTCDR Haywood.
  - a. AFCS.
  - b. Radar System.
  - c. Oil Cooler Rotary Blower.
  - d. Main Generator.
10. AOB. s.9(2)(g)(i) introduced the shaping of a Seasprite Withdrawal From Service Plan.

#### **Action Items**

11. Nil.

**DONM**

12. Date of Next Meeting proposed to be 15 Jun 23 at 1400 in the 6 SQN Briefing Room, due to clashes with the King's Birthday weekend.

G Haywood  
LTCDR, RNZN  
NACM