



Headquarters  
New Zealand Defence Force  
Defence House  
Private Bag 39997  
Wellington Mail Centre  
Lower Hutt 5045  
New Zealand

OIA-2023-4852

4 December 2023



Dear 

I refer to your email of 30 October 2023 to the Ministry of Defence requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), *information on the use of animals and/or parts of animals (including bones) that the New Zealand Defence Force has funded or taken part in since 2013 until now (31/10/23)*. On 2 November 2023, the Ministry transferred your request to the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) in accordance with the OIA; and on 6 November 2023 you clarified your request noting your research concerns *the ways animals are used for **Research, Testing and Teaching...as per defined under the Animal Welfare Act...in New Zealand, and we know the Defence Force was involved in or has funded animal experimentation in the past.***

The University of Otago provides specialist critical care training to NZDF first responders. This training which incorporates the use of animals is delivered under the University's Animal Use Protocol as approved by its Animal Ethics Committee. As a part of the provision of this training, the NZDF has previously funded research conducted by the University of Otago that supported the development of the training programme.

NZDF working dog handlers also receive training from Massey University veterinary services which does not fall under the definitions set out by the Animal Welfare Act. This training is focused on: first aid for dogs – first responder support to NZDF working dogs injured in operations/exercises; and, animal husbandry – keeping dogs healthy (i.e. diet and exercise).

From 2013, for the purposes of teaching/demonstrating anatomy, practising sutures, and making moulage (simulated wounds) to train NZDF first responders, the NZDF has sourced dead animal organs, skin, and bones from local butchers or farms. This use of dead animal parts also does not fall under the definitions set out by the Animal Welfare Act.

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