

Request for information concerning review of Oil Pollution Fund and MNZ's preparedness to respond to oil spill

Legislation	Official Information Act 1982, ss 18(f), 18B
Agency	Maritime New Zealand
Ombudsman	David McGee
Case number(s)	321739
Date	February 2012

Consulting with requester in fulsome way removed reason for refusal

Maritime New Zealand (MNZ) received a request for:

1. all correspondence with stakeholders and reports and briefings concerning the review of the Oil Pollution Fund; and
2. all reports and briefings in the previous 3 years concerning MNZ's preparedness or capability to respond to a Tier 3 oil spill.

MNZ asked the requester to specify a timeframe for request 1. The requester specified a timeframe of 3 years. MNZ then refused the request on the grounds of substantial collation or research, noting there were hundreds of stakeholders involved and an estimated 1600 documents.

When the requester complained to the Ombudsman, he said he would have refined his request further if given the opportunity. For example, if MNZ had provided a list of the types of stakeholders consulted, he could have limited his request to a certain category or categories.

The Ombudsman suggested to MNZ that a fuller consultation with the requester might resolve his complaint. MNZ agreed to this, and provided the requester with the list of stakeholders he sought in order to refine his request. The Ombudsman discontinued his investigation and the requester and MNZ were able to resolve the matter between themselves.

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