



14 December 2021

[Redacted]

Reference: OIA-2021/22-0665

Dear [Redacted]

Official Information Act request relating to exercises planned for November and December – follow up

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 25 November 2021. You requested:

“So are you telling me there are no exercises planned ANYWHERE IN NEW ZEALAND (point emphasised), covering the topics I specifically listed (and taken off the Civil Defence own website regarding the 2021 schedule minus specific dates and location of said posted exercises) and provided details for throughout New Zealand in the time frame I requested.”

In your original correspondence, you requested to be informed of “*all planned exercises for November December including proposed weapons proliferation, biological, biosecurity, misinformation prevention earthquakes, deemed tier level 3 or greater*”.

The exercise themes you have referred to are part of the National Security System National Exercise Programme, which the Tier Structure does not apply to. The Tier structure is used in the Civil Defence Emergency Management National Exercise Programme to define the different levels of civil defence emergency management exercises at a local, regional, and national level. There are no Tier 3 (inter-regional) or Tier 4 (national) CDEM exercises currently planned for the timeframe you have indicated (in November and December).

The National Security System National Exercise Programme exercise schedule does contain exercises on the themes you have referred to. We have identified an error in the exercise schedule on the website, with the year 2020/2021 being repeated. This should also contain the outyears of 2021/2022 and 2022/2023. The error has now been resolved.

The only activity that took place in the period you have referred to was a small exercise between 29 November 2021 to 30 November 2021 based on a cyber security scenario. There are no further National Security System exercises planned for any of the topics you have listed for the period November to December 2021.

The National Security System National Exercise Programme schedule comprises a 4-year cycle with a range of exercises designed and delivered over the period. Exercises held at a National level are a significant undertaking and the schedule is designed to be flexible. The programme may change to address new risks as they arise, and considers the need for agencies to respond to real emergencies when they occur. The response to COVID-19 has resulted in a number of agencies having to adjust their exercise and training programmes.

As a result, the current National Security System exercise schedule is to be reviewed early in 2022 and a revised schedule will be available on our website when it has been agreed.

It should be noted that the National Security System complements – but does not replace – agency readiness programmes. Lead agencies are still expected to exercise their own arrangements for their particular risks at the appropriate levels, including the activation of emergency coordination centres as needed.

If you are interested in a specific risk area, please contact the relevant lead agency directly. A list of lead agencies can be found in the National Security Systems Handbook, which is publicly available on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet website, at <https://dpmc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2017-03/dpmc-nss-handbook-aug-2016.pdf>.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

This response will be published on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's website during our regular publication cycle. Typically, information is released monthly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

Yours sincerely



Dave Gawn
Chief Executive
National Emergency Management Agency