



19 January 2024

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Tēnā koe [Redacted]

Thank you for your Official Information Act request to the Department of Conservation, received on 31 October 2023 in which you asked for:

'information contained within the task assignment for meeting FENZ regulations in backcountry huts;

If not contained within the task assignment, please provide internal communications (at director-level or above) regarding complying with FENZ regulations in backcountry huts;

If not contained within the task assignment, please provide external communications with FENZ regarding complying with FENZ regulations in backcountry huts.

The time period of my request is this calendar year. Please provide all information in an electronically searchable form, and provide email attachments. For clarity, when I say "director-level or above", I mean only one person in the correspondence needs to be at director-level, not both. When I say "meeting FENZ regulations in backcountry huts", I refer to these two news stories:

- <https://www.newsroom.co.nz/smoke-alarms-for-hundreds-of-doc-huts>
- <https://www.newsroom.co.nz/smoke-alarms-in-huts-doc-explains>

We have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982.

On 27 November 2023 we extended your request to 17 January 2024 due to the large quantity of information sought.

On 17 January 2024 we made a decision on your request and noted that additional time was required to prepare material for release. We also stated that this documentation would be provided to you no later than 19 January 2024.

Context

As you are aware, in December 2023, the Director Operations Support decided to pause the roll out of heat detectors and smoke alarms in back-country huts while we confirm our



approach to implementing the relevant regulations. We want to ensure we are putting our safety efforts into the right activities to best keep visitors safe from risks posed by fire. We have sought further advice on the best way to do this, and are working with our stakeholders on the best way forward in the coming months.

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

1. *Please provide information contained within the task assignment for meeting FENZ regulations in backcountry huts*

The requested task assignment is provided and accompanies our response as Attachment 1. For your reference we have also included the addendum to this task assignment that updated expectations and due dates for the task in October 2023, due to supply issues.

For further information please refer to the Schedule of Documents table.

2. *Please provide internal communications (at director-level or above) regarding complying with FENZ regulations in backcountry huts;*

For your information, please find attached internal communications (at director-level or above) regarding compliance matters with FENZ regulations in backcountry huts. This information accompanies our response as Attachment 2 (items 1 – 16).

I have decided to release relevant parts of the documents listed in schedule 1 (attachment 2), subject to information being withheld under one or more of the following sections of the Official Information Act, as applicable:

- personal contact details of officials, under section 9(2)(a) – to protect the privacy of natural persons, including deceased people
- free and frank expression under section 9(2)(g)(i) – to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs,

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Official Information Act.

3. *Please provide external communications with FENZ regarding complying with FENZ regulations in backcountry huts*

This aspect of your request is refused in full via section 18(g) of the Official Information Act as the information requested is not held. For your context there has been no written correspondence between the Department and FENZ regarding our compliance with FENZ regulations in backcountry huts last calendar year.



You are entitled to seek an investigation and review of my decision by writing to an Ombudsman as provided by section 28(3) of the Official Information Act.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) and enclosed documents may be published on the Department's website.

Nāku noa, nā



Karl Beckert
Director, Operations Support
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



OIAD-3527: Attachment 1 (Task Assignment & Addendum)			
Item	Date	Document description	Decision
1	28 September 2023	TASK ASSIGNMENT: Fire Evacuation Scheme for Huts	Released in part
2	26 October 2023	Addendum to Task Assignment: Fire Evacuation Scheme for Huts	Released in full.
OIAD-3527: Attachment 2 (Director Email Correspondence)			
1	12 October 2023	FW_ Fire Evacuation Scheme TA	Released in part
2	13 October 2023	RE: Smoke alarms in huts	Released in part
3	15 October 2023	FW: Smoke alarms in huts	Released in part
4	16 October 2023	RE: Timeframe for getting detectors in huts 1	Released in part
5	16 October 2023	RE: Smoke alarms in huts - 2	Released in part
6	16 October 2023	RE: Timeframe for getting detectors in huts - 2	Released in part
7	16 October 2023	RE: Timeframe for getting detectors in huts - 3	Released in part
8	16 October 2023	RE: Timeframe for getting detectors in huts - 4	Released in part
9	17 October 2023	RE: Newsroom query	Released in part
10	18 October 2023	Sitrep: smoke detectors/heat detectors	Released in part
11	18 October 2023	Meeting this morning with David Williams from Newsroom	Released in part
12	19 October 2023	Re: Fire media response	Released in part
13	19 October 2023	Fire media response	Released in part
14	27 October 2023	Fire alarm task: Updated timeframes	Released in part
15	27 October 2023	Urgent task to get out.t - Addendum for Fire Evacuation Scheme TA	Released in part
16	6 November 2023	RE: Smoke alarms/heat detectors in DOC huts	Released in part