Privacy Commissioner
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11 February 2026

Sam Brown

By email only to: fyi-request-33427-1191fd4f@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act Request (Our Ref: OIA/0497)

We refer to your Official Information Act request received on 6 January 2026. We received two requests from you – the second request being a more detailed version of the first request.

Your requests covered the following relating to satellite internet providers

1. Any complaints, inquiries, or investigations received by your office regarding satellite internet providers' data collection practices, data retention policies, or handling of New Zealand user information.
2. Any assessment, advice, or guidance provided regarding whether satellite internet providers routing New Zealand internet traffic through foreign jurisdictions (particularly United States data centres) complies with New Zealand privacy law, including consideration of Privacy Act requirements and international data transfer obligations.
3. Any advice provided to government agencies or Ministers regarding data sovereignty implications of government agencies, emergency services, or critical infrastructure operators using satellite internet services where traffic routing and data storage occurs outside New Zealand jurisdiction.
4. Any correspondence with satellite internet providers regarding their privacy practices, data handling procedures, or compliance with New Zealand privacy requirements.
5. Any assessment of whether users of satellite internet services receive adequate privacy protections compared to terrestrial internet services, particularly regarding exposure to foreign signals intelligence collection or disclosure requirements under foreign legislation such as the United States CLOUD Act.

You indicated that the context for your request is seeking to understand whether privacy and data sovereignty implications have been adequately assessed as New Zealand increases reliance on satellite internet services that route traffic through foreign jurisdictions.

Our response

Having checked our records, we do not hold information in scope of points 2-5.

It is not possible to identify whether we hold information in scope of point 1 without substantial collation and research, as our files are not held in a way that means we can identify this issue without manually checking numerous files.

Your request (points 2-5) is therefore declined under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act. Your request (point 1) is declined under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act.

While we are not able to provide the information requested, I can confirm that the Office is aware of the privacy issues relating to satellite internet services and may provide advice in future should this issue be raised with us.

For your information, some of the relevant human rights considerations are set out in this report from Access Now – Holding Space for Human Rights: Improving the Governance of Satellite Internet Connectivity (February 2025).[1]

Please note that if you are not satisfied with this response to your request, under section 28 of the Official Information Act 1982 you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review our decision on your request, however we would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this with you first.

Nāku iti noa, nā

Liz MacPherson
Deputy Privacy Commissioner

[1] https://www.accessnow.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Holding-Space-for-Human-Rights-a-bid-for-better-governance-of-satellite-internet-connectivity.pdf