

Introduction to Operation Concord package

In March 2015, the New Zealand Police and Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) advised the public of a criminal blackmail threat to contaminate infant and other formula products with 1080.

Public interest in the threat was significant and a substantial amount of information was provided to ensure people were well informed about the threat, its implications and what actions they should take to keep their families safe.

Government agencies and others have received requests for further information about the government and industry response to the threat. MPI has been co-ordinating all responses to these requests under the Official Information Act (OIA). MPI is now releasing a package of information in response to these requests.

This release is intended to answer requests received under the OIA by all Government Ministers, departments and agencies. Individual requesters will receive responses from MPI, or from the Minister for Primary Industries or the Minister for Food Safety.

Information in this release provides detail on cross-government planning, response, advice and communication preparation from when the threat was received in late November 2014 through to the public announcement on 10 March 2015. Where information is redacted the relevant sections of the OIA are noted in the margin of documents.

This information release includes:

- a timeline of events (including when relevant parties were notified)
- advice to Ministers
- communications planning and advice.

Governance

New Zealand's national security system provides the platform for cross-agency management of national security issues. This was activated to respond to the threat and operated at four levels:

Watch Group

A Watch Group is a meeting of senior officials from relevant agencies, who meet in order to support all-of-government coordination and to provide advice to ODESC Chief Executives. Watch Groups were convened regularly from 27 November 2014.

Officials Committee for Domestic and External Security Coordination (ODESC)

ODESC is a meeting of Chief Executives that provides oversight, advice and guidance on operational matters relating to national security. ODESC met regularly from 28 November 2014.

Concord Ministers and Cabinet

Ministerial oversight and guidance was maintained via normal ministerial mandates, as well as regular meetings of a wider Concord Ministers group. Advice to Concord Ministers was provided from ODESC and communicated by the chair as well as directly from relevant agencies (in particular from MPI as the lead agency).

Lead Agencies: Police and MPI

MPI was the lead agency for the response to the criminal blackmail threat, with the

New Zealand Police leading the criminal investigation.

MPI's internal response structure was activated immediately. This included coordination with other agencies, particularly the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, with support from the Department of Conservation, the Environmental Protection Authority, Ministry for the Environment and New Zealand Trade and Enterprise.

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC)

DPMC's contribution to the inter-agency response was made up of its normal policy advice role in support of the Prime Minister and its role within the Domestic and External Security Coordination (DESC) system. DPMC's role within the DESC system was centred around chairing and providing secretariat support to the Officials' Committee for Domestic and External Security Coordination (ODESC), which is made up of key public sector Chief Executives.

ODESC provided the focal point for agency coordination, joint activity and oversight throughout the response. ODESC itself was supported by Watch Groups which provided another layer of coordination at the senior official level.

Police investigation

As there is an ongoing Police investigation into the criminal blackmail threat, material has been withheld that could jeopardise the investigation or prejudice future responses or Police investigations. These redactions are made to avoid prejudice to the maintenance of the law, under section 6(c) of the OIA.

Health sector

The Ministry of Health worked across the health sector to prepare guidance for clinicians and the general public. This material is included in this information release.

Testing and increased security

Since this threat was made late last year, MPI, manufacturers and retailers worked together to significantly increase the security across the supply chain.

MPI also developed a validated testing programme to test for 1080 in raw milk, infant and other formula, whether it is sold domestically or exported. Specialist, accredited laboratories undertake the 1080 testing.

These measures provide a high level of confidence that infant formula manufactured in New Zealand remains safe and does not contain 1080.

International Markets

Information relating to New Zealand's trading partners has been withheld. These redactions are made to protect New Zealand's international relations or to avoid prejudice to the substantial economic interests of New Zealand, under sections 6(a) and 9(2)(d) of the OIA.

Timeline of events

Date	Event
27/11/2014	Fonterra and Federated Farmers receive a letter threatening to contaminate infant formula. These threats are handed to the New Zealand Police.
27/11/2014	Watch Group is convened to consider the threat. Watch Group agencies included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) • Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) • Police • Ministry of Health (MoH) • Department of Conservation (DoC) • Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) • New Zealand Customs Service • Ministry for the Environment (MfE) • Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) • WorkSafe New Zealand • Treasury
27/11/2014	The Prime Minister and the Minister for Primary Industries, the Minister for Food Safety, the Minister of Police, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Minister for Trade are advised of the threat.
28/11/2014	ODESC is convened to consider the threat. ODESC agencies included: MPI, DPMC, Police, MoH, DoC, MFAT, Customs, MfE, EPA, Worksafe NZ and Treasury.
2/12/2014	MPI convenes an internal watch group to monitor the issue, and development of communications material commences.
15/12/2014	Workshop is held to ensure strategic alignment across the responses (government, police and industry).
19/12/2014	Dairy supply chain assessment completed. 1080 supply chain assessment completed.
23/12/2014	1080 risk assessment in foods completed (see risk assessment document).
15/1/2015	Milk testing methods validated.
15/1/2015	Sampling strategy approved.
27/1/2015	Governance Group expanded with invitations to other Government Agencies extended.
10/2/2015	Initial meetings with affected infant and other formula manufacturers to inform them of the threat.
11/2/2015	Initial meetings with major global suppliers to inform them of the threat.
13/2/2015	Workshop about tracing held with manufacturers.
13/2/2015	Food and Grocery Council Chief Executive informed of the threat.
18/2/2015	Initial meetings with New Zealand supermarket chains to inform them of the threat.
25/2/2015	Leader of the Opposition briefed on the threat.
10/3/2015	Public announcement of the threat.