

17 February 2023

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your Official Information Act request to the Department of Conservation (DOC), received on 18 January 2023 in which you asked:

“Can DOC please provide any documents/briefings/task assignments/updates about the efficacy of MAUI63’s technology – any assessments, basically, by DOC scientists and others, about whether MAUI63’s technology actually works and how useful the data is.

The time period of my request is from the date of the above press statement, June 9, 2021, to today’s date”.

On 25 January 2023 you clarified your request to ‘others’ being DOC staff who are not scientists.

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

1. *can DOC please provide any documents/briefings/task assignments/updates about the efficacy of MAUI63’s technology – any assessments, basically, by DOC scientists and others [other DOC staff], about whether MAUI63’s technology actually works and how useful the data is.*

DOC remains interested in the potential utility of the Māui63 drone and associated software as a means, amongst other tools, to improve our understanding of marine mammals.

DOC established a contract with Māui63 to enable work to further develop the potential for their artificial intelligence (AI) software. In supporting this work, the intention was to develop the AI capability in conjunction with the dolphin photo ID work undertaken annually in collaboration with the University of Auckland. The final report relating to this project is publicly available on the DOC website:

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/conservation/native-animals/marine-mammals/maui-nectors-dolphins/maui63-photo-id-ai-final-report.pdf>



DOC also engaged with Māui63 in relation to a two-day trial of flights of the Māui63 drone on the 26th and 27th of May 2022 over Lyttelton Harbour. These flights were undertaken to allow DOC and SailGP, with Māui63, to assess the utility of the drone as a monitoring tool within the Sail GP Marine Mammal Management Plan. The flights were undertaken over the two days in May 2022; however no dolphins were detected during these flights making it difficult in this instance to make a fuller evaluation. I am providing you with the letter of support from DOC and the report from the above activity.

Item	Date	Document description	Decision
1	29 June 2022	Māui dolphin photo-identification using artificial intelligence: Progress report	Released in full
2	19 May 2022	Letter of Partnership with Māui63 – Lyttelton Drone Trial	Released in full
3	4 November 2022	Flight Report for May trial flights – Māui63	Released in full.

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

██
██
Nāku noa, nā

██

Amber Bill
Director, Biodiversity System & Aquatic
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai