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**MANATŪ KAUPAPA
WAONGA**
NEW ZEALAND
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

9 December 2025

RESPONSE TO YOUR OFFICIAL INFORMATION REQUEST

Thank you for your email of 11 November 2025, in which you requested, pursuant to the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following:

- 1. Please provide details of any plans, specifications, concept designs, or proposals for the interior or VIP fitout of the aircraft. I would like to know whether a contractor or supplier has been selected, and if so, their name and the agreed or estimated cost. Please include any descriptions, renderings, or documents outlining the configuration or facilities planned – for example, whether the aircraft will include beds or business-class-style seating, and whether there are alternative configurations for non-VIP missions such as freight, troop deployment, or humanitarian flights.*
- 2. Please also provide any correspondence, directions, or decisions from the Prime Minister's Office, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, or Cabinet regarding who may use the aircraft. I am seeking any policy, directive, or instruction restricting use of the A321XLR aircraft to VIPs only, and preventing use by NZDF personnel, Antarctica New Zealand or MFAT staff, or others.*
- 3. I also request any correspondence, assessments, briefings, or advice on the operational implications of these restrictions, including the number of additional flights that may be required to support Antarctic or other deployments as a result. Please include any cost estimates or modelling of increased flight movements or fuel costs arising from these VIP-use restrictions, and any impact assessments or internal advice on efficiency, readiness, or environmental implications compared with the current 757 operations.*

The separate elements of your request have been numbered for administrative purposes.

Regarding element one of your request, concerning the interior of the Airbus A321XLR, two documents were considered in scope of your request:

- *LOPA Variation Proposal*, 9 September 2025; and
- Airbus: *A321-200NY Cabin Configuration for: KIW Royal New Zealand Air Force*, 6 November 2025.

The *LOPA Variation Proposal* is enclosed, however some information is withheld in accordance with the following grounds of the Act:

- Where making the information available would be likely to prejudice the entrusting of information to the government of New Zealand on a basis of confidence by the government of any other country or any agency of such a Government [section 6(b)(i)].
- Where it is necessary to protect information where the making available of the information would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information [section 9(2)(b)(ii)].

Your request also captured the Airbus: *A321-200NY Cabin Configuration for: KIW Royal New Zealand Air Force* document. However, as this information was provided to the Ministry in confidence by Airbus and is considered to be commercially sensitive it is withheld in full, in accordance with section 9(2)(b)(ii) of the act. Some of the details related to the configuration of the aircraft are however reflected in the *LOPA Variation Proposal*.

The project has focused on commercial off-the-shelf seating to ensure reliability and serviceability of the aircraft, and to minimise schedule delays. The Layout of Passenger Accommodation (LOPA) is not designed to be configurable, however it allows the A321XLR to be utilised for all operational outputs.

The operational outputs and associated requirements for the two Airbus A321XLR are outlined in the Cabinet material relating to this procurement. This is available on the Ministry's website here: <https://www.defence.govt.nz/publications/defence-force-boeing-757-aircraft-replacement/>

The Airbus A321XLR are being delivered under a six-year lease-to-buy agreement with the US-based Air Lease Corporation. The project has a total capital cost of \$620 million and a four-year operating cost of \$80.86 million. Further information is available in the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) press release here: <https://www.nzdf.mil.nz/media-centre/news/lease-and-livery-developments-for-rnzaf-boeing-757-replacements/>

Concerning element two and three of your request, relating to correspondence, directions, or decisions from the Prime Minister's Office, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, or Cabinet regarding the operational use of the Airbus fleet, the operation outputs of the Airbus A321XLR is outlined in the Cabinet material linked above. This material reflects all key decisions and directions on both the procurement options and operational outputs of the Airbus A321XLR.

As such, element two of your request is declined, subject to section 18(d) of the Act, as the information is publicly available. Element three of your request is declined, pursuant to section 18(e) of the Act, as to the best of our knowledge no such information exists or can be found.

Where information is withheld under section 9(2) of the Act, the public interest is not considered to outweigh the need to withhold this information at this time.

Please note that responses to official information requests are published where possible. This response to your request will be released shortly on the Ministry's website, with your personal information removed.

Under section 28(3) of the Act you have the right to request the Ombudsman to investigate and review this response.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Minson
Deputy Secretary Capability Delivery

MEMORANDUM

To:	FAMC-S Board		
From:	s9(2)(g)(i) , FAMC-S IPTL		
Copy to:	CAF, ACC, DAD (Air), DAD(MoD), FAMC-S CIL, FAMC-S Ops SME		
Date:	09 Sep 25	File number:	N/A
Subject:	LOPA Variation Proposal		

Purpose

1. Proposal to the FAMC-S Board to endorse the proposed amendments to A321XLR Layout of Passenger Accommodation (LOPA) to incorporate Government feedback summarised in LOPA V6.2, to be submitted to the Capability Owner, the Chief of Air Force (CAF), for approval.

Context

2. LOPA V6.0 at Annex A was endorsed by the FAMC-S Project Governance board on 12 Aug 25.
3. On the 13 Aug 25, CAF and DepSec Capability Delivery received feedback from the Government requesting additional modifications to the LOPA.
4. The LOPA V6.2 at Annex B was developed to meet this request.

Comment

5. The development of LOPA V6.2, at Annex B, is the result of significant engagement with post-delivery modification centres, airline partners s9(2)(b)(ii), LOPA specialists, CAF as the Capability Owner and s6(b)(i).
6. The Government requested that the project explore the selection of lie-flat board room seats, and to increase their number from six to eight.
7. s6(b)(i)
8. This was accepted by the Government who accept that the eight board room seats will not be lie flat, with the Thompson lie-flats (herringbone seat configuration) the dedicated sleeping pods.

9. The features of LOPA V6.2 presented to Government, with the noted updates from LOPA V6.0:
- 9.1. Increased board room seating from six to eight.
 - 9.2. Increased Premium Economy from 16 to 20, to cater for representation from trade delegations.
 - 9.3. Provision of the over-sized toilet for changing.
 - 9.4. A review of the table design in the board room zone, with at least one table, on one side, and the other side fitted, but not with, for a possible future use of a table. s9(2)(g)(i)
- 9.5. Focus on the selection of COTS seats to ensure:
- 9.5.1. Reliability and serviceability of aircraft.
 - 9.5.2. Minimising the need for certification of seating, reducing the exposure to schedule delays.
10. Based on these updates the Government feedback presented back to s9(2)(b)(ii) and CAF was that they were satisfied that LOPA V6.2 will meet their requirements and for the project team to progress this design.
11. The requirement for crew rest (EASA Class 2) on non-VIP tasks in LOPA V6.2 will be achieved by use of the lie-flat seats. On long-haul VIP tasks crew rest will be achieved using screened Premium Economy and Economy seats.
12. LOPA V6.2 can deliver a 100-person troop movement through use of the 20 Premium Economy and 80 Economy seats. Supernumerary crew may be required to utilise the lie-flats and/or board room seats for these tasks.
13. LOPA V6.2 at Annex B is the FAMC-S recommended solution as it represents an optimal balance of configuration to deliver against both VIP and military roles/requirements while benefiting from the improved functionality, reduced cost, simplified certification and improved reliability/supportability of COTS products.
14. LOPA V6.2 adheres to project User Requirements, particularly URD – 2.1.1 (MOE threshold (meets) up to 100 pax with 40 kgs of bags each) and 3.1. (MOE threshold (meets) sufficient seating to accommodate a minimum of 22 premier seats and 40 economy class seats).

Next steps

- 15. The FAMC-S Board to endorse LOPA V6.2.
- 16. Submit LOPA to Capability Owner for approval.
- 17. Confirmation of LOPA specification with ALC is required NLT 17 Sep to prevent potential post-production delays.

Attachments

18. Annex A: FAMC-S A321XLR – RNZAF LOPA Rev 6.0.

19. Annex B: FAMC-S A321XLR – RNZAF LOPA Rev 6.2.

Recommendations

20. It is recommended that you:

- a. **Note** CAF has engaged with Government to ensure LOPA V6.2 is reflective of their revised requirements.
- b. **Endorse** LOPA V6.2 to be submitted to the Capability Owner, for approval.

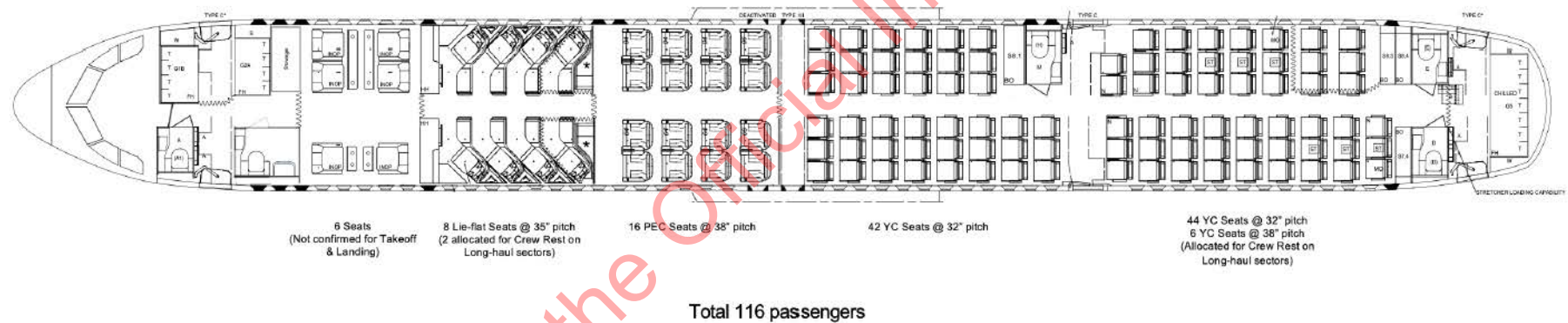
s9(2)(k)

s9(2)(g)(i)

FAMC-S IPTL

FAMC-S: Future Air Mobility Capability – Strategic

A321XLR – RNZAF LOPA Rev 6.0

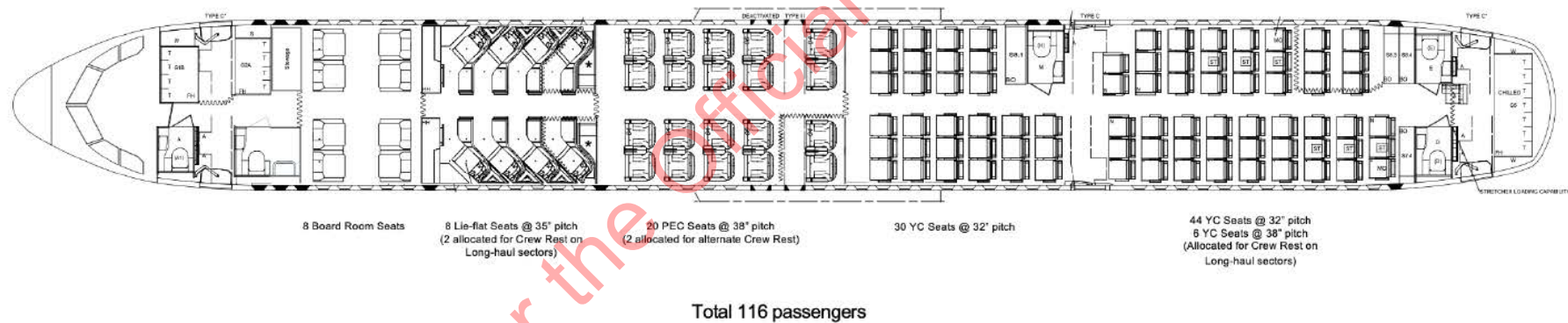


Rev 6.0 – 09 Aug 2025

Note: Schematic Drawing only, subject to Engineering and Certification assessment

FAMC-S: Future Air Mobility Capability – Strategic

A321XLR – RNZAF LOPA Rev 6.2 Approval LOPA



Rev 6.2 Approval LOPA – 08 Sep 2025

Note: Schematic Drawing only, subject to Engineering and Certification assessment