

Defence House
34 Bowen Street
Wellington, New Zealand

P +64 (04) 496 0999
E info@defence.govt.nz

PO Box 12703
Molesworth Street
Wellington 6144, New Zealand

www.defence.govt.nz



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

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V Tempsky

fyi-request-32865-32b1cd59@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear V Tempsky

RESPONSE TO YOUR OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

Thank you for your email of 17 November in which you requested, pursuant to the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), information pertaining to the replacement of the NZDF's fleet of Boeing 757s.

The Government announced on 21 August the purchase of two new Airbus A321XLR aircraft as a result of a competitive procurement process. The aircraft will be acquired on a six-year lease to buy arrangement. You can read more about this announcement at:

<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/defence-helicopter-plane-decisions-announced>.

The following three Cabinet papers (listed below) outline the advice and decisions on the purchase of these aircraft and have been proactively released on the Ministry of Defence website:

- the September 2024 Cabinet paper and associated minute of decision *Defence Force – Boeing 757 Aircraft Replacement: Indicative Business Case* [FPS-24-MIN-0025, FPS-24-SUB-0025],
- the December 2024 Cabinet paper and associated minute of decision *Defence Force – Boeing 757 Aircraft Replacement: Detailed Business Case* [CAB-24-MIN-0497, CAB-24-SUB-0497], and
- the August 2025 Cabinet paper and associated minute of decision *Defence Force Boeing 757 Aircraft Replacement: Project Implementation Business Case* [EXP-25-Min-0080, EXP-25-SUB-0080].

In accordance with normal business, certain information contained in these documents has been withheld in accordance with sections 6 and 9 of the Act. These are available to read at <https://www.defence.govt.nz/publications/defence-force-boeing-757-aircraft-replacement/>.

What synergies were identified in the potential acquisition of 737 Max 8 with existing RNZAF assets, compared to A321XLR?

The P-8A Poseidon, also produced by Boeing, is a modified version of the Boeing 737-800. There are substantial differences between the Poseidon and the 737 Max 8, meaning there are limited synergies in simulators, spares or maintenance.

The A321XLR does not have synergies with existing Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) assets, but does provide significant synergies with commercial aircraft operators and maintainers based in New Zealand such as Air New Zealand, who operate a large number of A32 aircraft. As part of the procurement, Defence officials have engaged with Air New Zealand to better understand these synergies. Further, Qantas Airways recently completed their introduction into service of 20 A321 XLRs, increasing the opportunity for regional support.

For comparison the RNZAF would be the only New Zealand based operator of the 737 Max 8, but not of the A321 family of aircraft.

How did Defence apply the key investment consideration (as stated in the DCP) of "What is the Australian approach, and is there any reason for New Zealand to take a different approach?" in selecting the A321XLR compared to the 737 Max 8?

As part of the process for determining the best option for the Future Air Mobility capability, New Zealand Defence officials met with Australian counterparts to better understand the make-up of the Australian strategic air mobility fleet and their approach to the capability. Australia uses a larger variety of aircraft than New Zealand, including C-17 Globemasters, KC30A Multi-Role Tanker Transports and 737 Boeing Business Jets, to deliver the same services that are being delivered solely by the Boeing 757s and C-130Js for New Zealand.

Defence excluded the above Australian aircraft as viable options for the RNZAF for a number of reasons, including the size of the aircraft preventing operations on key Pacific Island runways, or not meeting the key requirement of being able to reach Singapore or Antarctica in a single flight while carrying a suitable number of passengers.

What were the 17 long-list options considered for the 757 replacement?

The Indicative Business Case considered a long list of 17 options. The following key factors were considered for the B757 replacement:

- the type of aircraft but also:
- how the aircraft would be crewed and maintained,
- the ownership model,
- the implementation of the project, and
- the funding arrangements.

Viable options from the long list were then combined to provide a short list and preferred way forward. The options were as follows:

Dimension	Option		
Solution – Type of Aircraft	Military aircraft fleet	Heavy	Large aircraft that offer greater capability than the C-130J, be it through range, performance, load capacity and functionality.
		Medium	An aircraft designed to address the military requirements of the capability that has similar functionality and performance as the C-130J.
		Light	An aircraft designed to address minimal military requirements at lesser cost than other military options.
	Civilian aircraft fleet	Enhanced Civilian	Heavy civilian aircraft that includes additional capability, for example air to air refuelling.
		Heavy	Heavy civilian aircraft that offer significant increases in range and payload over and above the current B757.
		Medium	An aircraft that has similar passenger capacity to the B757 with some options having increased range.

		Light Strategic Multi-Role	This is a smaller high performance aircraft designed to provide long range, fast, efficient and comfortable transport but can be modified to deliver military effects such as information collection and medical evacuation.
Crewing and Maintenance	NZDF Crewed and Maintained		
	NZDF Crewed, Privately Maintained		
	Privately Crewed and Maintained		
Ownership model	Charter		
	Crown Ownership		
	Lease		
Implementation	Single Phase		
	Phase the delivery of aircraft		
Funding	Crown funding		
	Alternate Funding		

How did Defence assess the whole of life cost of the preferred A321XLR lease, versus 737 Max 8?

Whole of life costs for the project were modelled based on the capital and through life costs of the different options, with lease costs included where applicable. These costs were based on the formal Request for Information received from industry.

Capital investment included:

- the cost of acquisition and introduction into service,
- integrated logistics support,
- future upgrades and refreshes, and
- end of life disposal.

Through-life operating costs included:

- personnel,
- direct operating costs and consumables,
- ongoing training, and
- maintenance costs.

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

