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

RESPONSE TO YOUR OFFICIAL INFORMATION REQUEST

Thank you for your email of 13 April 2026, in which you requested, pursuant to the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following:

- 1. When did the MOD and NZDF begin to use the phase "Five Eyes" to describe military cooperation between the US, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand?*
- 2. Where and in what context did this name begin to be used?*
- 3. Please provide copies of documents describing and giving approval for this name being used.*
- 4. Did the use of this name signify a new agreement between these five countries and, if so, please provide copies of the agreement and documents describing the new agreement.*
- 5. If not, why did the name start to be used.*

I note you have also made a similar request to the New Zealand Defence Force. I refer you to their response for when and why that agency adopted the usage of *Five Eyes* when referring to defence cooperation. Please note this response is relevant to the Ministry of Defence only.

The usage of *Five Eyes* in the context of defence cooperation does not signify a new agreement. The use of *Five Eyes* has developed over time and simply reflects the five countries grouping who cooperate closely on matters of intelligence and national security.

It would constitute substantial collation and research to identify precisely when, and the specific context, in which the Ministry first used *Five Eyes* in reference to defence cooperation. As such, the first two elements of your request are declined, pursuant to section 18(f) of the Act.

There is no Ministry document in existence that matches the description of the document you have requested in element 3 of your request, therefore this element is declined, pursuant to section 18(e) of the Act.

The following strategic defence policy documents use *Five Eyes* in reference to defence cooperation. These documents were approved by Cabinet.

- *Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018*, 6 July 2018:
<https://www.defence.govt.nz/assets/publications/Strategic-Defence-Policy-Statement-2018.pdf>
- *Defence Assessment 2021: he moana pukepuke e ekengia e te waka*, 8 December 2021: <https://www.defence.govt.nz/assets/publications/Defence-Assessment-2021.pdf>
- *Defence Policy and Strategy Statement 2023*, 4 August 2023:
<https://www.defence.govt.nz/assets/publications/23-0195-Defence-Policy-and-Strategy-Statement-WEB.pdf>
- *2025 Defence Capability Plan*, 5 April 2025:
<https://www.defence.govt.nz/assets/publications/Defence-Capability-Plan-25.pdf>

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Schmidt
Deputy Secretary Policy and Planning