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

20 May 2026

Dear

RESPONSE TO YOUR OFFICIAL INFORMATION REQUEST

On Friday 15 May 2026, the New Zealand Defence Force transferred your Official Information Act request to the Ministry of Defence. You requested, pursuant to the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following:

After seeing the confirmation of the acquisition of the Airbus A321XLR for the RNZAF, would there be any plans to modify these aircraft in a similar fashion as our current Boeing 757-2K-2 through the incorporation of a deck level cargo door, integrated airstairs, etc?

If so, would these modifications be conducted prior to delivery while on lease, or after the RNZAF has fully taken over the aircraft at the end of the six-year lease-to-buy contract?

If there are not any current plans, then what would the reasoning? Cost? Practicality? Other difficulties?

There are no plans to modify the two RNZAF A321XLR in the manner of the Boeing 757s. These aircraft are being delivered as commercial off-the-shelf aircraft, avoiding major bespoke modifications. A key factor in delivering an aircraft without modifications is being able to deliver the capability to timing requirements, while still delivering against all other key User Requirements.

As a part of the 2025 *Defence Capability Plan* considerations, Defence is required to ask a series of questions to guide the acquisition. One of these is “*what is the minimum viable capability needed?*” The Airbus A321XLR without military adjustments represents the minimum viable capability needed to meet the NZDF’s strategic aircraft requirements.

You can find further information relating to the acquisition of the Airbus A321XLR in the Cabinet material for the Boeing 757 Aircraft Replacement, available on the Ministry’s website here: <https://www.defence.govt.nz/publications/defence-force-boeing-757-aircraft-replacement/>.

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