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

26 June 2026

RESPONSE TO YOUR OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

Thank you for your email of 28 May 2026, in which you requested, pursuant to the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), information held by the Ministry of Defence relating to the Budget 2026 public sector savings exercise.

- 1. The agency's Budget 2026 savings options paper(s) or initiative bids submitted to the Treasury or the Minister between 1 September 2025 and 19 May 2026.*

The Ministry is not subject to the Budget 2026 baseline savings exercise. Defence funding in Budget 2026 – covering both the Ministry of Defence and the New Zealand Defence Force – is available from the Beehive website at <https://beehive.govt.nz/release/budget-2026-shores-maritime-security> and detail of funded initiatives is provided on the <https://budget.govt.nz> website.

Further details about Budget 2026 bids will be published as part of the usual Treasury Budget 2026 proactive release. As such, your request for that bid information is declined under section 18(d) of the Act – that the information will soon be made publicly available. As part of that release, it will be necessary to withhold certain information where release would be likely to prejudice the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand (section 6(a) of the Act). In addition, certain information will be withheld in accordance with the Act in order to:

- maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials (section 9(2)(f)(iv))
- maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions (section 9(2)(g)(i))
- enable the Minister of the Crown or any department to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (section 9(2)(j)).

2. *Any document showing any FTE reduction expected at the agency as a result of Budget 2026, broken down by business group, function, or location to the extent that breakdown exists.*

The Ministry is subject to the in-principle target of reducing public service Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) to below 55,000 by 2029. Chief Executives have been asked to work through this. No decisions have been made. As such, Ministry documents regarding this matter are withheld at this time pursuant to section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act – in order to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials.

In terms of information provided by others on this matter, the Treasury and Public Service Commission are currently preparing a number of documents for proactive release, including formal letters on this matter from the Minister of Finance, and the Chief Executives of the Treasury, the Commission, and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. This will be included alongside the usual Treasury Budget proactive release process. Given this, the elements of your request relating to material covered by that proactive release are declined under section 18(d) of the Act – that the information will soon be made publicly available.

3. *Any document held by the agency that defines or identifies which of its roles are considered 'frontline' and which are not, for the purpose of the Budget 2026 exercise.*

The Ministry has no formally defined frontline staff. By way of context, the Ministry is a civilian agency that is responsible for the development of defence policy, international defence engagements, and the delivery of major military equipment. As such, the Ministry does not provide services directly to the public.

No information has been identified within the scope of this element of your request, and it is declined pursuant to section 18(e) of the Act.

4. *Any business case, modelling, or analysis dated between 1 September 2025 and present concerning the use of AI, automation, or digital tools to replace, reduce, or substitute roles within the agency.*

The Ministry is not implementing AI or digital tools directly and has not undertaken any analysis of the impact of specific implementations on workload or staffing levels at this time. The NZDF is responsible for the operation and management of the Defence Information Environment, which the Ministry uses to undertake its work – including any AI or digital tools operating within that environment.

As such, no information has been identified in the scope of this element of your request, so it is declined pursuant to section 18(e) of the Act.

5. *Any change proposal, indicative structure document, or consultation document issued to staff or unions on or before the date of this request relating to the Budget 2026 savings exercise.*

As noted above, the Ministry is not subject to the Budget 2026 baseline savings exercise. Therefore, no information has been identified within the scope of this element of your request, and it is declined pursuant to section 18(e) of the Act.

6. Correspondence between the Chief Executive (or equivalent) and the Minister, the Treasury, or the Public Service Commissioner between 1 January 2026 and present concerning the savings exercise or workforce reductions.

As for the response to question 2, Ministry material regarding this is withheld at this time pursuant to section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act – in order to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials.

In terms of information provided by others on this matter, you are referred to the information that will be published by the Treasury and Public Service Commission alongside the usual Treasury Budget proactive release process. As such, the elements of your request relating to material covered by that proactive release are declined under section 18(d) of the Act – that the information will soon be made publicly available.

In addition, I understand that you have made the same request to the Treasury and that other Treasury information not already covered by the proactive release will be addressed in that agency's response. I refer to you the Treasury's response for relevant information created by that agency.

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

Yours sincerely

Anton Youngman
Deputy Secretary, Strategy, Management and Assessment

