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

25 September 2026

RESPONSE TO YOUR OFFICIAL INFORMATION REQUEST

Thank you for your email of 8 September 2026 to the Ministry of Defence (the Ministry), in which you requested, pursuant to the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

Cabinet papers and decision papers produced between 19 July 2025 and 8 September 2026 concerning the capability and resource implications of possible New Zealand participation in AUKUS Pillar II.

Please include any final assessment of:

- the Pillar II project concepts New Zealand was considering or had shortlisted*
- artificial intelligence, autonomous systems and other military technologies involved*
- associated critical-mineral, supply-chain, data or computing-infrastructure requirements*
- interoperability, information-security or technology-sharing requirements*
- likely costs, workforce needs and opportunities for New Zealand industry or research institutions.*

No Cabinet or other decision papers were produced in the time period you have outlined. The Ministry has conducted an internal search for information related to your request, and no documentation has been identified within scope of your request. As such, I am declining your request pursuant to section 18(e) of the Act, that the information requested does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

By way of further background information, all previous Ministerial briefings on AUKUS Pillar II are available from the Ministry's website at <https://defence.govt.nz/publications>.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Schmidt
Deputy Secretary, Defence Policy and Planning