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

10 June 2026

RESPONSE TO YOUR REQUEST FOR OFFICIAL INFORMATION

Thank you for your email of 21 May 2026, in which you requested, pursuant to the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *What Artificial Intelligence is your Ministry considering implementing in the next year?*
- *What aspects or parts of the business will it be implemented? Ie how will the AI be used*
- *Will it's implementation reduce the workload or staff numbers?*
- *What safety and security protocols has it had to pass to be considered acceptable for implementation?*

By way of providing some further background information to your request, the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) provides the Ministry of Defence (the Ministry) with its Information and Communication Technology (ICT) services.

Please find below our responses to each of your specific questions.

1. What Artificial Intelligence is your Ministry considering implementing in the next year?

The Ministry does not directly implement information technology systems, including Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. Therefore, the Ministry is not currently considering the implementation of any specific AI tools.

The NZDF is responsible for the operation and management of the Defence Information Environment which the Ministry uses to undertake its work. The Ministry does not independently select or implement AI tools. Instead, the Ministry works with the NZDF to:

- understand emerging technologies, including AI tools, that may be beneficial to be introduced into the Defence Information Environment; and
- provide advice and influence, where appropriate, on how such technologies could support Defence outcomes.

Currently, the only AI tool available to Ministry and NZDF staff within the Defence Information Environment is Microsoft Copilot Chat. Defence is also trialling an industry engagement AI

tool that will be a 'front door' for industry enquiries into Defence. It is envisaged this tool will triage requests based on their content and assign an owner.

2. *What aspects or parts of the business will it be implemented? ie how will the AI be used?*

As the Ministry does not implement AI tools directly, it has no confirmed implementation programme of AI tools.

All AI use, future and current, would be subject to human oversight, with Ministry staff retaining full responsibility for the quality and accuracy of outputs. The *AI Intentions for the Ministry of Defence* document (attached), issued in April 2026, informs how the Ministry is approaching AI adoption as tools become available through the NZDF.

3. *Will its implementation reduce the workload or staff numbers?*

The Ministry is not implementing AI tools directly and has not undertaken any analysis of the impact of specific AI implementations on workload or staffing levels at this time.

Consistent with broader public sector practice, and the *AI Intentions for the Ministry of Defence* (April 2026), the Ministry's interest in AI tool use is focused on:

- improving efficiency and productivity by removing repetitive tasks; and
- enabling staff to focus on strategic thinking, collaboration, and solving complex problems.

4. *What safety and security protocols has it had to pass to be considered acceptable for implementation?*

Any AI tools made available within the Defence Information Environment will be subject to NZDF's security, privacy, and information assurance processes. While the Ministry has a role in policy, governance, training, and monitoring use of AI within its business, it does not independently approve or accredit technology for use within the Defence Information Environment.

We understand that you have made a similar request to the NZDF and as they are responsible for implementing tools within and managing the Defence Information Environment, they are best placed to provide information on specific technologies under consideration and the associated security and assurance processes.

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 & Assessment

Enclosed:

- *AI Intentions for the Ministry of Defence* (April 2026)

AI Intentions for the Ministry of Defence

The vision

Inside the Ministry, AI will enhance the delivery of our Strategic Intentions and enrich the work our people do, in ways that are safe, transparent, and trusted.

Three Strategic Pillars will guide how we adopt AI tools:

Enhance the delivery of our Strategic Intentions

- We will adopt AI where it strengthens our core mission and helps us successfully deliver our growing work programme.

Enrich the work our people do

- We will adopt AI where it enriches our work by removing repetitive tasks, enabling our people to focus on strategic thinking, collaboration, and solving complex problems

In ways that are safe, transparent, and trusted

- We will use AI responsibly, with clear human oversight, robust accuracy and source checks, and secure handling of information.

AI should enable better decisions, not replace responsibility for them.

We recognise people are at different levels of comfort with AI. Our approach will support everyone: whether you are experimenting already or just beginning.

Three support areas where you will see initiatives:



PEOPLE

Uplifting capability across the Ministry to support safe and effective use of AI

- Foundational learning via FutureReady
- Practical reference guides
- AI adoption continuum support and messaging



TRUST

Building confidence through safe, transparent, and trusted use.

- AI policies
- Responsible AI use guidance
- AI Reference Group



PARTNERSHIPS

Working with others to accelerate the adoption of AI technologies and share stories of success.

- NZDF's Information Command to get access to secure, high-quality AI tools
- NZ Public Service AI Work Programme to access resources, guidance, and support
- Trusted vendors to co-design and tailor AI solution to the Ministry's needs