



Headquarters  
New Zealand Defence Force  
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New Zealand

OIA-2025-5339

gth

June 2025



Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 6 April 2025 to the Ministry of Defence. As your request mostly concerns matters regarding the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF), it was transferred in accordance with the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). Responses to the various parts of your request are provided below:

*1. How many levels of command were there between the Commander of the Manawatu and the Chief of the Navy?*

In terms of line management, there are three levels between a Commanding Officer and the Chief of Navy. However, in accordance with a Command Directive, a Commanding Officer may report directly to the Chief of Navy.

*2. As Commander Gray was evidently not qualified for Command at the time of her appointment on 9 December 2022, what measures were put in place at the time of her appointment to ensure that the necessary training was provided in a timely manner.*

Commander Gray was qualified for command.

*3. How many hours deck officer experience did Commander Gray have at the time of her appointment in 2022.*

This part of your request is declined in accordance with section 18(e) of the OIA as the Royal New Zealand Navy does not measure "deck hours".

*4. What rank of officer was charged with ensuring the training required by Commander Gray was completed in a timely manner*

Captain (Navy).

*5. How many officers in the chain of command between the Chief of Navy and Cmdr Gray are to be court-martialed as a result of this disaster.*

No decisions on Courts Martial have been made.

*6. Does Rear Adml Golding intend to resign forthwith with the loss of 50% of pension and benefits*

No.

7. To what extent did the Defence Department policy goal of 52% female staff in Tier 2 and Tier 3 positions influence the decision to appoint Commander Gray.

8. If the answer to question 7 is no influence or or very little, how many other potential candidates of superior or generally comparable experience and qualification were "in the running" for Commander Manawanui prior to the appointment of Commander Gray - bearing in mind competition for Commander positions is presumably quite fierce.

9. Of these other officers who may have been "in the running" for appointment, how many were male and how many were female. See above

10. Given the Defence Departments stated goal of 52% female staff in Tier 2 and 3, please provide documents evidencing analysis of the following policy question. I may not have the most up-to-date information but believe that prior to October 2024 overall female representation in the New Zealand Defence Force was about 20-25% across all services but I believe this may vary significantly between ranks and roles. Assuming that general information, it appears likely there will have been say 3 times as many suitable staff for promotion amongst male staff officers compared to female. To achieve the 52% goal, the Navy is going to have to select senior officers from a materially less experienced total pool of females than would be available if promotion was solely on merit from the entire pool of candidates. It therefore appears inevitable, (and apparently as evidenced by this incident) that this policy goal has and will result in both a dilution of competence at a senior level and discourage competent males from employment in the Navy because the "deck is stacked". Please provide the documents evidencing prior consideration and analysis of this 52% senior female policy and its likely effects on operational performance and male staff retention.

These parts of your request are referencing a New Zealand Ministry of Defence policy goal that does not apply to the NZDF. Information on gender within the NZDF is publicly available in the Annual Report<sup>1</sup>.

11. Respectively, what are the total numbers of male and female officers and male/female non-commissioned officers/ ratings in the Navy

Rank	Female		Male		TOTAL
	N	%	N	%	
Junior NCO	304	30.7%	685	69.3%	989
Junior Officer	103	31.1%	228	68.9%	331
Senior NCO	109	21.9%	388	78.1%	497
Senior Officer	75	22.3%	262	77.7%	337

12. In view of the Manawanui incident, is consideration being given by the Navy to redirecting resources, time and effort away from Inclusive Leadership and Cultural Competence into core skills such as navigation, operational competence and ship safety. If not, why not.

The Chief of Navy stated the following when the Court of Inquiry report was released:

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.nzdf.mil.nz/assets/Uploads/DocumentLibrary/NZDF-Annual-Report-2024\\_Web-version.pdf](https://www.nzdf.mil.nz/assets/Uploads/DocumentLibrary/NZDF-Annual-Report-2024_Web-version.pdf)

*Ultimately, there are a range of issues, including the lack of commonality across the fleet, which means our people need to constantly adapt to new procedures each time they change ships.*

*To counter this, as a Navy we will be embarking on a transformation programme that seeks to reform the approach to operating. We need to do things differently. We need to adapt to new technologies, change the way we approach what we do, and find new ways to continue to deliver on what is expected of us. This means investing in new technologies, streamlining ways of working, reviewing and adapting training and making sure our people are set up to succeed in their roles.*

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website, with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely

**GA Motley**

Brigadier

Chief of Staff HQNZDF