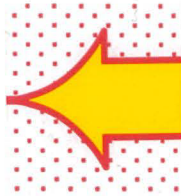




Headquarters  
New Zealand Defence Force  
Defence House  
Private Bag 39997  
Wellington Mail Centre  
Lower Hutt 5045  
New Zealand

15<sup>th</sup> May 2025

OIA-2025-5362



[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 24 April 2025 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), the following:

- *The name and rank of the current head of legal officers in the Royal New Zealand Navy.*
- *A brief outline of their responsibilities within this role.*
- *The reporting and oversight structure for legal officers in the Navy.*
- *Clarification regarding the powers and responsibilities of legal officers within the Navy. This may include their role in advising on military law, international law, court representation, human rights and privacy law, and operational support during deployments.*

Legal officers in the three Services of the New Zealand Defence Force – the Royal New Zealand Navy, the New Zealand Army, and the Royal New Zealand Air Force – operate under a “Joint Model” of Defence Legal Services (DLS). DLS provides legal advice to the three Services using legal officers from across the Services. There is not a separate command or oversight structure for legal officers within each of the Services.

The Director of DLS is Brigadier James Kennedy-Good, New Zealand Army. Within this role, Brigadier Kennedy-Good is responsible for the legal advice provided to the Services. There are a number of different teams within DLS which specialise in particular areas, and they report to Brigadier Kennedy-Good. Brigadier Kennedy-Good himself reports to the Chief of Staff of the Headquarters of the NZDF.

As to the powers and responsibilities of legal officers (generally), I refer you to the publicly available descriptions for legal officers on the NZDF careers website<sup>1</sup>. The material for each Service is the same, except for the background images being relevant to the particular Service. The role is to provide legal advice on issues, as and when they arise.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.defencecareers.mil.nz/army/careers/browse-roles/legal-officer](http://www.defencecareers.mil.nz/army/careers/browse-roles/legal-officer)

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