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New Zealand Defence Force  
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OIA-2025-5407

24<sup>th</sup> June 2025

[REDACTED]@uni.massey.ac.nz

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 23 May 2025 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), the following information:

*Any internal assessments, reports, briefings, or similar on the development, deployment, ethical considerations, or compliance with international law, of artificial intelligence (AI) systems, or autonomous weapons (AWS) that have, are, or are planned to be tested, developed, deployed, and trained conducted on, within the NZDF or NZDF agencies from 2021 to current.*

*Current policy or frameworks governing the training, use, and development of AI and AWS within the NZDF and NZDF agencies.*

*The NZDF's future strategy regarding AI and AWS, including research, domestic and international partnerships, and ethical considerations.*

*Any assessments or reports evaluating the risks and benefits of AWS and AI-led AWS tested, developed, deployed, or training conducted on, by the NZDF or NZDF agencies from 2021 to current.*

*Any assessments, reporting, or notes relating to interoperability by way of training, operating, or exercising with other agencies or forces (both domestic and internationally) regarding AI or AWS from 2021 to current.*

*Information on how the NZDF aligns or differs from allies on AI and AWS strategy and ethical considerations.*

The New Zealand Government sets guidance and policy relating to use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Autonomous Weapon Systems (AWS). With specific regard to AWS, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade is the lead agency in New Zealand. The provision of government strategy and policy for the defence sector is the role of the Ministry of Defence. I refer you to the Ministry's response to your 22 May 2025 request to that agency, which is being provided to you separately.

With respect to AI, the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) is not using AI in production environments or operationally, but is using and trialling AI, and AI enabled tools, for research purposes in data processing, sensor processing, and in support of modelling

activities. For this reason there is no broad policy or frameworks regarding AI in the context of your request.

The only example of an AWS system currently employed by the NZDF is the Phalanx Close-In Weapon System. This system is equipped on some Royal New Zealand Navy ships for point defence and has been in service for decades.

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