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OIA-2025-5571

10<sup>th</sup> November 2025

[\[redacted\]@nzme.co.nz](mailto:[redacted]@nzme.co.nz)

Dear [redacted]

I refer to your email of 13 October 2025 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

- *The documents say the “hybrid” email system failed a security scan in April 2024. What failed and when was it fixed?*

*What was the original timeframe for the new email system project and what is the timeline now? Could you please set out where time lag came in?*

*Cabinet approved the first phase from existing NZDF funding. Has NZDF sought any additional money since then? What is the current total cost forecast, compared with the original baseline?*

*What is the current search capability across email and archives? The documents note issues with OIA response times or completeness - could you explain how much of an issue that has been and when it will no longer be an issue?*

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- *How many people are still stuck without the full Outlook desktop experience on older PCs and when will the last user get it back?*
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- *Is there now final approval to run the cloud email across NZDF, and are any conditions attached? Also, are any out-of-support email servers still in use—or are they fully removed/secured?*
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- *With 594 inboxes moved by June 2025, how many inboxes are still waiting and when will the transfer be completed?*
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- *Has the rollout schedule changed since the latest update (June 2025) and if so, what changes have been made?*
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- *The papers showed “BlackBerry device upgrades” as a blocker. Was this phone software, security settings, or actual phones—and why did it hold up the email move?*
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- *Five Eyes partners have also veered towards Microsoft 365 and tightened hybrid-security rules. Has the design choice here been guided by interoperability principles?*

A security scan conducted in April 2024 identified issues within the hybrid email environment. These issues were remediated, and the environment was re-scanned to ensure that the system was secure. Technical information about what failed and when remediation occurred is withheld in accordance with section 6(a) of the OIA. As a hybrid environment, there was some uncertainty concerning the location of archived emails. Processes have since been updated and training delivered.

The new email system, Exchange Online, has been operating since July 2024. The migration to the email system (as well as migration of other software applications in the new environment) is underway. It is occurring in tranches and will continue throughout 2026 in line with the June 2025 DIP Board report. No users are without access to the full Outlook application, and as at 16 October 2025, there were 23,670 mailboxes to be migrated to Exchange Online. A timeframe for when the migration will be completed is unavailable.

Microsoft 365 has interim approval to operate, with remediation work underway on specific components. Information on the status of email servers is withheld in full in accordance with section 6(a) of the OIA. Email services are included in the cost of Microsoft licensing and are supported by in-house staff. Migration costs are budgeted to be approximately \$700,000 over the next two to three years. The migration to Microsoft 365 aligns with the natural evolution of Microsoft products and reflects a common direction among partner nations.

Requests considered under the OIA are managed on a case-by-case basis and the goal remains the same: to provide a decision as soon as reasonably practicable and within the legislated timeframe. Many requests for correspondence involve a significant volume of information and decisions are made in accordance with the OIA.

The previous Blackberry solution was not compatible with Exchange 2016. A multi-stage upgrade was required to ensure all integrated components supporting secure email access were aligned. This upgrade was completed on 9 July 2025.

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