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New Zealand Defence Force
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OIA-2025-5579

7th November 2025

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 20 October 2025, requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), the following:

- Any and all advice relating to sections 14 & 15 of the Veterans' Support Act in 2025.
- Any and all advice on the implications from the recent court decision (august 2025)
- Any and all correspondence relating to the recent court decision (aug 25) discussing how the interpretation would need to be changed
- Any correspondence relating to governments consideration to any legislative changes/ clarification that will be needed
 - o This may include but is not limited to, emails, texts, attachments, policy documents, signal messages/
- Any and all correspondence/ documentation relating to the \$3.2 billion dollar liability
- Any correspondence between VANZ and the Ministers office relating to the updated interpretation of the law re: section 15.

The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) assisted in the preparation of the response to your request for similar information from the Minister for Veterans. Please refer to that response (OIA-2025-0094). Any further relevant information is withheld, for the time being, in accordance with section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the OIA to maintain the constitutional conventions which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials.

- *What is the success rate of applications to section 15 over the past 6 years.*

Veterans' Affairs (VA) has maintained records of claims that could not be determined under the standard section 14 process since June 2020. Since then, 141 claims have been considered under the provisions of section 15. Of that total, 75 (53 percent) were accepted based on there being a reasonable hypothesis relating the claimed condition to their service.

These decisions represent a very small proportion of the total number of claims resolved by VA each year. Most claims are able to be resolved under section 14 and a relevant Statement of Principles (with an acceptance rate of between 75 and 80 percent). VA processed over 3,400 claims in 2024.

- *What is the average time for claims to be processed over the past 6 years*

Information regarding processing times (including average claims processing times for a number of different types of claims), is provided on the VA website¹. This information is updated regularly, and is from 1 January 2023. The requested information across the full time period will not be provided as

¹ <https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/for-clients/information-about-claims/processing-times-for-claims/>

to do so would impair the efficient administration of VA. This is in accordance with section 16(2)(a) of the OIA.

- *How many people are on the waiting list*

As at 31 October 2025, 919 people had claims with VA, with 1,690 open claims.

- *How many people on the waiting list were surveyed in last years survey*

All participants in the 2025 VA Satisfaction Survey were selected at random by an external survey provider from those veterans who had a claim processed within the last 12 months. The only caveat to this is that all Māori VA clients who made a claim in the past year were included in the sample. Your request cannot be answered without a manual cross-referencing the survey providers' data with VA claims records and client records. This part of your request is therefore declined in accordance with section 18(f) of the OIA, as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

- *How many veterans are there in NZ?*
- *How many are getting support through section 14/15 of Veterans' Support Act?*

The ex-serving population is estimated to be approximately 140,000. It is estimated that 40,000 to 45,000 of that number are eligible for some form of support under the current provisions of the Veterans' Support Act 2014, and about 10,000 are currently receiving some form of support from VA. Approximately 3,500 of that number receive Veterans' Independence Programme (VIP) services only. More information about VIP services is available on the VA website.

- *How much is budgeted for the future support of veterans?*

Veterans' Entitlements have been valued at \$4.132 million as at 30 June 2025. This represents the present value of entitlements arising from qualifying service in the current or prior years.

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 <https://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz> or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

GA Motley
Brigadier
Chief of Staff HQNZDF