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New Zealand Defence Force  
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OIA-2026-5678

24<sup>th</sup> March 2026

Kerry Parkin  
[fyi-request-33786-162ecef7@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-33786-162ecef7@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Kerry Parkin

I refer to your email of 20 February 2026 to the Ministry of Defence, requesting under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) *regarding the loss of the HMNZS Manawanui in October 2024 and the subsequent Ministerial communications strategy*. Your request was transferred to the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) to consider NZDF information in accordance with the OIA.

The specifics of your request are addressed below.

*Ministerial Advice on Public Messaging: Copies of all advice, briefings, and communications (including emails, text messages, and internal memos) provided to the Minister of Defence between October 5, 2024, and October 25, 2024, regarding the public messaging strategy following the sinking of the HMNZS Manawanui.*

*Gender and Identity Narratives: Any specific advice or communications discussing the framing of public responses around the Captain's gender, or the use of terms such as "misogynistic narrative" or "vile" to characterize public or media questioning of the vessel's command and operational failure.*

*Selection and Appointment Process: Any internal communications discussing the "merit-based" vs "optics-based" appointment of leadership roles on the HMNZS Manawanui, and whether external political or social objectives influenced these appointments.*

These parts of your request are refused in accordance with section 18(e) of the OIA as the requested information does not exist.

*Training and Operational Readiness: Copies of any briefings provided to the Minister in the six months prior to the incident regarding the "hollowness" of the Navy, specifically relating to crew training levels, sea-time experience, and the operational risks of the HMNZS Manawanui.*

A copy of the April – June 2024 Capability and Readiness Update is publicly available on the Defence Force website<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.nzdf.mil.nz/assets/Uploads/DocumentLibrary/OIA-2025-5336\\_Capability-and-Readiness-Updates.pdf](https://www.nzdf.mil.nz/assets/Uploads/DocumentLibrary/OIA-2025-5336_Capability-and-Readiness-Updates.pdf)

In accordance with section 28(3) of the OIA, you may ask an Ombudsman to review the withholding of information. Information regarding the process 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.

Yours sincerely

**GA Motley**

Brigadier

Chief of Staff HQNZDF