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OIA-2026-5680

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2026

[REDACTED]@nzme.co.nz

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 21 January 2026, requesting *the Assembling Authority's comments on the Manawanui Court of Inquiry*. Your request has been considered under the Armed Forces Discipline Act 1971 (AFDA).

I apologise for the delay in responding. The Chief of Navy has authorised release under section 200T of the AFDA. A signature is withheld to avoid its malicious or inappropriate use, such as phishing, scams or unsolicited advertising in accordance with section 9(2)(k) of the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA); and, the name of an individual is withheld to protect privacy in accordance with section 9(2)(a) of the OIA.

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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

**Enclosure:**

1. Assembling Authority Comments: Court of Inquiry On The Circumstances That Resulted In The Loss Of HMNZS Manawanui Off Upolu, Samoa, On 6 October 2024

## Headquarters New Zealand Defence Force

### Chief of Navy MINUTE 04/2025

01 Apr 25

#### See Distribution

#### **ASSEMBLING AUTHORITY COMMENTS: COURT OF INQUIRY ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT RESULTED IN THE LOSS OF HMNZS MANAWANUI OFF UPOLU, SAMOA, ON 6 OCTOBER 2024**

#### **Reference:**

A. *Court of Inquiry assembled by RADM Garin Golding, RNZN, Chief of Navy, for the purpose of collecting and recording evidence on the circumstances that resulted in the loss of HMNZS MANAWANUI off Upolu, Samoa, on 6 October 2024, dated 31 Mar 25.*

#### **Assembling Authority Comments**

1. Ref A is a Court of Inquiry (Col) into the circumstances that resulted in the loss of HMNZS MANAWANUI off Upolu, Samoa, on 6 Oct 24. I received the final Col report on 31 Mar 25.
2. Given the Col inquired into a serious and significant matter where there is high public interest, I sought an External Legal Review (ELR) of the report and the record of proceedings in accordance with the President's and Assembling Authority's Guide to Courts of Inquiry (the Col Guide).<sup>1</sup> I also received the ELR on 31 Mar 25. The ELR made recommendations to enhance the clarity of the Col Report, which were implemented by the Col prior to its finalisation.
3. Having now considered the findings and recommendations of the Col and the advice contained in the ELR, I determine that:
  - a. The Col was conducted in accordance with relevant legislation and orders;
  - b. The Col report adequately answers the Col's terms of reference; and
  - c. The findings and recommendations in the Col report are reasonably made on the evidence collected.

#### **Recommendations**

4. I accept in full all the recommendations set out in the Col. The work plan to progress the Col's recommendations, including attribution of responsibility and expected timeframes, will be outlined by me separately in forthcoming direction and guidance. This will be provided to the NZDF Col office for its records in due course.

#### **Additional Commentary**

5. The need to extensively inquire into this matter in a relatively short timeframe is a significant undertaking. This has been a robust inquiry into a challenging set of circumstances, and I consider the Col report to be of a very high quality.
6. Accordingly, I commend the President of the Col, the Col members, and counsel assisting for their professionalism and dedication in producing a high quality, comprehensive, and timely report. I

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<sup>1</sup> Col Guide, section 7, p 120.

am also grateful for the work of the ELR team, who conducted an incredibly thorough and timely review of the Col report and record of proceedings.

7. I conclude by acknowledging, as I have previously, my deep gratitude for the professionalism and courage of those onboard HMNZS MANAWANUI in the most trying of circumstances, and to those who assisted with the rescue and post incident efforts.

s. 9(2)(k)

**GR GOLDING**  
RADM  
ASSEMBLING AUTHORITY

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**For Information:**

COURT OF INQUIRY OFFICE (Attention: s. 9(2)(a) )