



Headquarters
New Zealand Defence Force
Defence House
Private Bag 39997
Wellington Mail Centre
Lower Hutt 5045
New Zealand

OIA-2026-5972

6th October 2026

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 8 September 2026 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

1. *Establishment / purpose.*

When was COAT approved, why was it established, and when is it expected to become fully operational? Who was it approved by?

Please provide the final business case, establishment proposal, decision paper, approval paper or equivalent document that authorised the establishment of COAT and sets out its rationale, purpose and intended benefits.

Where that document considers alternative delivery models, please include copies of any analysis of providing the relevant capability in-house versus through contractors or external suppliers.

2. *Role / organisational position.*

Where does COAT sit within NZDF, and what operational or organisational functions does it support? Please include partner agencies it is intended to interact with or supplement.

Please provide:

- the current COAT charter, terms of reference, operating model or equivalent document defining its functions and responsibilities; and*
- the current organisational chart showing COAT's reporting line and its relationship, where applicable, to Information Command, defensive cyberspace operations and other NZDF cyber operational functions.*

3. *Staffing / cost*

Please provide:

- COAT's approved or target establishment, including total FTE and the number of military and civilian positions;*
 - the number of those positions currently filled and vacant;*
 - its approved annual personnel and operating cost or budget; and*
 - the source of funding for the team.*
 - The amount of capex required to set up COAT, along with a broad category breakdown of how any capex establishment cost has been allocated.*
- Please also state whether COAT forms part of, or is funded wholly or partly through,*

the \$53 million Cyber Security and Support Capability investment announced in November 2025.

4. Scope of cyber operations

At a high level, is COAT's remit limited to supporting defensive cyberspace operations, or does it also support other forms of NZDF cyber operations or military cyber effects? Does COAT encompass offensive cyber operations, or intend to procure that capability in future?

Please provide any current unclassified policy, charter or operating-model material that records this boundary.

If held, please also provide the current NZDF definitions of:

- cyber operations;*
- defensive cyberspace operations;*
- offensive cyberspace operations; and*
- cyber effects or military cyber effects.*

5. Stated development of military cyber effects

The DCP 2019 stated that NZDF cyber capabilities would be developed to include "deployable teams capable of generating a range of military effects".

Please state the current status of that commitment, including whether the capability is operational, under development, superseded or otherwise altered; and whether COAT is considered a fulfillment of this part of the DCP.

Please also provide the most recent final or approved programme, implementation or status document recording the development or current status of that capability.

6. External suppliers

Please provide a schedule of any contracts, work orders or other paid external engagements directly supporting the establishment or operation of COAT, showing:

- supplier;*
- broad description of the services;*
- contract value;*
- start and end dates;*
- Tender method; and*
- Any related GETS reference IDs.*

The Cyber Operations Application Team (COAT) was approved by the Cabinet as part of a detailed business case in November 2025. The COAT will sit under the Information Command unit at the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF), and its purpose is to provide specialist expertise in cyber security engineering, automated testing, and compliance assurance. The COAT will ensure that the NZDF platforms and applications continue to meet security requirements.

The COAT provides a digital product and support management function. This will involve identifying and prioritising NZDF requirements, and coordinating the development and ongoing improvement of secure, reliable, and compliant information systems and digital services. It will engage with relevant NZDF stakeholders, government agencies, and industry partners to ensure its products, including capabilities, services, tools and supporting processes, meet the requirements of the NZDF.

The COAT is funded from part of the \$53 million Cyber Security and Support Capability (CSSC) investment, announced by the Government in November 2025. It forms part of the first stage of a plan to enhance cyber security capabilities as outlined in the Defence Capability Plan 2025. The CSSC project is an evolution of the Defence Capability Plan 2019

intent, and the COAT is a component of the CSSC. The COAT's personnel, operating, and establishment costs are included within the wider programme funding and are not identified as separate annual operating or capital expenditure allocations.

The budget for the COAT is withheld under section 9(2)(j) of the OIA. The COAT is currently in the process of being established, this will be completed when its workforce, product ownership responsibilities, and management processes are in place and the team is operating efficiently. Since recruitment is ongoing and further recruitment may be required, a specific timeframe for full establishment cannot be accurately provided at this stage. All roles will be civilian full-time equivalent roles.

The COAT has not entered into any contracts, nor does it manage any contracts, work orders, or paid external engagements. Any contracted services supporting products within the COAT portfolio will be procured and managed through broader NZDF or Defence digital service arrangements. Given this, no contracts can be directly attributed to the establishment or operation of the COAT.

More specific information concerning the COAT is withheld under section 6(a) of the OIA, as the release of this information would likely prejudice the security or defence of New Zealand. With regard to your request for documents, the release of draft governance, organisational, and reporting arrangements would create a misleading or incomplete picture of the final structure and disclose sensitive information regarding NZDF's developing cyber-related capability management arrangements. Accordingly, this information is withheld in full under section 6(a) of the OIA, for the reason explained above, and section 9(2)(g)(i) of the OIA to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions during the establishment of the COAT.

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 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