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

OIA-2026-5990

16th November 2026

s9(2)(a)

Dear s9(2)(a)

I refer to your email of 9 September 2026 (transferred to the New Zealand Defence Force [NZDF] by The Treasury) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

> *I request the following information concerning the establishment in 2025/26 of the multi-category appropriation "Defence Force Capabilities Prepared for Joint Operations and Other Tasks", replacing the separate Air Force, Army, and Navy preparedness appropriations.*
>
> 1. *Please provide the paper, briefing or other principal advice recommending and seeking approval for establishment of the MCA, including any Treasury advice or comments.*
> 2. *Please provide the approval to establish the MCA and any conditions applying to transfers or reallocations between its Air Force, Army and Navy categories.*
> 3. *Please provide any assessment in those documents of the expected benefits, risks or accountability implications of replacing the three separate appropriations with the MCA.*
>
> *I am not seeking routine Budget material or correspondence unless it substantively discusses the rationale for, or conditions applying to, the new appropriation structure.*

In 2024, the NZDF proposed to seek joint Ministers' approval to establish a multi-category appropriation (MCA) through the October Baseline Update (OBU) process that enables adjustments to Vote Defence Force appropriation baselines. Copies of the relevant papers and briefings are withheld in accordance with sections 6(a) and 9(2)(ba)(i) of the OIA. The majority of the information contained within these documents provides specifics on operational funding, and is budget information that was provided on a basis of confidence.

Excerpts concerning the establishment of the MCA contained in those papers are provided below:

Chief Financial Officer Minute 57/2024, 4 October 2024, to the Chief of Defence Force

> 'Through the OBU process, the NZDF will seek to establish a new Multi-Category Appropriation (MCA) titled "Defence Force Capabilities Prepared for Joint Operations and Other Tasks" to better manage risks the Vote is exposed to as a consequence of the nature of the operations the NZDF undertake, and the currently challenging fiscal environment.
>
> This MCA will enable the NZDF to be more responsive across all of its capabilities, without compromising the integrity of funding allocations to Air, Navy and Army.'

Note to the Minister of Defence 2024-321, 9 October 2024

'This OBU update includes the following proposed adjustments:

Establishment of a new multi-category appropriation titled "Defence Force Capabilities Prepared for Joint Operations and Other Tasks".'

Letter from Minister of Defence to Minister of Finance

'The NZDF is seeking approval for the establishment of a new multi-category appropriation titled "Defence Force Capabilities Prepared for Joint Operations and Other Tasks MCA" as recommended in paragraph 25a.

The establishment of this MCA aligns the annual appropriations for Navy, Air and Army under a single purpose statement, and further enables the NZDF to deliver its Defence Force capabilities.

It will achieve this through mitigating real risks of impending NZDF operational decisions by enabling operational decisions to be made in regards to the most suitable capability to deploy, without first requiring any urgent out-of-cycle technical adjustments to be sought.'

'25. I agree and recommend that you:

a. Approve the establishment of the following new multi-category appropriation "Defence Force Capabilities Prepared for Joint Operations and Other Tasks MCA" in Vote Defence Force, to be administered by the New Zealand Defence Force and with Minister of Defence as appropriation Minister, effective from 1 July 2025.

MCA Title	Overarching purpose statement	Vote Name	Department Name	Appropriation Minister
Defence Force Capabilities Prepared for Joint Operations and Other tasks	The single overarching purpose of this appropriation is to generate Defence Force capabilities as directed by the Government of New Zealand	Vote Defence Force	New Zealand Defence Force	Minister of Defence

Category Type	Category Title	Category Scope
Departmental Output Expense	Airforce Capabilities Prepared for Joint Operations and Others Tasks	This category is limited to the generation of Air Force capabilities that achieve the levels of readiness for military operations and other tasks as directed by the Government of New Zealand.
	Army Capabilities Prepared for Joint Operations and Others Tasks	This category is limited to the generation of Army capabilities that achieve the levels of readiness for military operations and other tasks as directed by the Government of New Zealand.
	Navy Capabilities Prepared for Joint Operations and Others Tasks	This category is limited to the generation of Navy capabilities that achieve the levels of readiness for military operations and other tasks as directed by the Government of New Zealand.

A copy of the Minister of Finance approval is provided at Enclosure 1.

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

JHR Sellwood
Captain, RNZN
Acting Chief of Staff HQNZDF

Enclosure:
1. Minister of Finance letter to Minister of Defence, 4 November 2024.