



13 August 2025

[REDACTED]
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Ref: OIA-2025/26-0017

Dear [REDACTED]

Official Information Act request relating to national security roles

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 16 July 2025. You requested:

Kia ora: Under the OIA, can DPMC please state:

[1]. How many national security/counter-terrorism roles, if any, have been cut/expired/are no longer funded? If the number is zero, please state this.

[2]. If the answer is non-zero, please state if there are replacement roles.

[3]. Please provide all feedback, internal and external, on the proposed changes/merger of the National Security Group and Risk Systems and Governance Group. Additionally, I'd welcome attributable comment on these moves.

For ease of reference, I have numbered your request.

Information being released and background:

As a small central agency, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's (DPMC) role around national security is stewardship and coordination of the wider system, which is composed of a range of larger operational agencies.

This broader national security system has received significant funding increases, capability uplift, and has grown in size since 2019. Over time, national security priorities evolve in response to the threats facing New Zealand and New Zealanders. National security focus will pivot according to the dynamic nature of threats and risks. Accordingly, our national security workforce is always evolving, including in the allocation of resources and the way we organise ourselves. Separately, DPMC has undergone a review to ensure it utilises all its resources efficiently and effectively to deliver value and results for New Zealanders.

This review has recently concluded with DPMC recently finalising a new structure change across all groups. The upshot is that DPMC will move from a headcount of 247 to 229 – a reduction of 18 roles. Of the roles being disestablished across DPMC, 20 were vacant as of 3 July 2025. Under the changes, the National Security and the Risk and Systems Governance groups will combine under a single Deputy Chief Executive as the National Security and Resilience (NSR) group.

Within NSR, the National Security Policy Coordination team will move away from the siloed and theme-focussed way it has previously operated. The small theme-specific groups (including counter terrorism and foreign interference) have been disestablished and replaced with policy groups that work across all national security themes. As the complex nature of

threats evolve, this more integrated policy approach has been adopted to ensure that DPMC has the agility, the redundancy, and the specialists it needs to perform its functions.

In relation to parts [1] and [2] of your request and with respect to counter terrorism specifically, three roles have been disestablished, and have been replaced by a larger policy group that will focus on a range of national security issues, including counter terrorism. Furthermore, under this non-siloed model, extra policy resource can be brought in from other parts of NSR, if and when needed.

The disestablished counter-terrorism policy roles are:

- Coordinator
- Principal Advisor
- Programme Manager.

The roles in the new policy group are:

- Three Principal Advisors
- Two Senior Advisors
- One Advisor.

These changes will not see any erosion of our focus on the sector responsibilities DPMC holds. DPMC continues to be well placed and resourced to deliver, including to provide leadership and coordination across the sector on core issues.

In relation to part [3] of your request, it is refused under the following sections of the Act:

- s6(a), to protect the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand
- s9(2)(a), to protect personal privacy
- s9(2)(ba)(i), to protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence and would be likely to prejudice the supply of similar information, or information from the same source, and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied.

As allowed under section 16(1)(e) of the Act, we are providing the below summary:

- Staff feedback strongly supported the merger of National Security Group (NSG) and the Risk and Systems Governance Group (RSGG) under a centralised model. The separation of the groups in 2023 was generally viewed as unsuccessful. Feedback indicated this division had led to increased silos, reduced communication, and diminished collaboration between the groups.
- The proposal to disestablish the coordination siloes and the coordinator roles (and the establishment of a coordination group) saw a range of feedback. While some saw the proposal as a positive shift to ensure the right policy approach was in place to meet the evolving threats we face, others questioned whether DPMC would continue to provide the same level of strategic coordination. Some feedback suggested that the work undertaken by the coordinators had advanced to a point where it could be effectively managed by a broader team or function.
- Other key feedback themes included mixed views on the reduction of Principal Advisor roles and the establishment of more Advisor roles. While some supported this as a way to grow talent and foster a culture of empowerment, others questioned whether there was sufficient work for Advisor-level staff.

- Suggestions were also made to adjust reporting lines, such as having certain units report directly to the Chief Executive for greater impact, though concerns were raised about spreading roles too thin and underestimating resource needs.
- Support was noted for combining resilience and risk policy functions, but that there needed to be clarity on roles and responsibilities. Additionally, the need for there to be a refreshed look at prioritisation and the long-term vision of the National Security policy functions was highlighted.

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Act. No public interest has been identified that would be sufficient to outweigh the reasons for withholding that information.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

This response will be published on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's website during our regular publication cycle. Typically, information is released monthly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

Yours sincerely



Annabel Ritchie
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