



16 March 2026

Ref: OIA-2025/26-0547

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request relating to New Zealand's plan if a nuclear winter were to eventuate

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request, which was received by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) on 1 March 2026. You requested:

"Can you please provide all information about New Zealand's plan if a nuclear winter were to eventuate?"

I can advise that DPMC has carried out a search of its electronic databases for information relevant to your request. No documents have been identified as within scope of your request and, as such, your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as the requested information does not exist.

DPMC's [website](#) sets out New Zealand's *National Risk and Resilience Framework* (the Framework), including 28 National Risks. National Risks are those hazards and threats that could have serious immediate and/or long-term effects on New Zealand's safety, prosperity and/or national security, requiring national-level intervention and coordination. The Framework outlines the actions taken at the national level to proactively build resilience so we are better able to anticipate, prepare for and manage National Risks; prevent them where we can; and reduce their potential likelihood, consequences and cost where we cannot.

New Zealand's strategic crisis management arrangements (the Officials' Committee for Domestic and External Security Coordination [ODESC] system) are used to coordinate multi-agency government responses to a range of crises on an "all hazards, all threats" basis. A nuclear attack would trigger activation of the ODESC system, which would seek to ensure a comprehensive approach is used to manage and mitigate strategic risks arising. Any significant impacts of a nuclear attack, such as consequences arising from a nuclear winter, would be managed in a multi-sector manner in a similar way to other emergencies/crises with widespread impacts.

The Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 and National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan Order 2015 provide a range of powers for the Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups and the Director of Civil Defence Emergency Management and National Controller (who are employees of the National Emergency Management Agency) to respond to emergencies.

Further to this, the Ministry of Health has an Office of Radiation Safety (ORS) that administers the Radiation Safety Act 2016 and the Radiation Safety Regulations 2016. If you would like further information about ionising radiation, you can contact ORS by emailing: orsenquiries@health.govt.nz.

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 DPMC 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.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Clarke-Watson'.

Jeremy Clarke-Watson
Deputy Chief Executive
National Security and Resilience