DEPARTMENT OF THE
PRIME MINISTER AND **CABINET**
TE TARI O TE PIRIMIA ME TE KOMITI MATUA

23 June 2026

Ref: OIA-2025/26-0761

[redacted]

Tēnā koe [redacted],

Official Information Act request: National Security and Intelligence products and staff development policies

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 26 May 2026. You requested:

> *"[1] Your policies relating to the tertiary education development of intelligence staff in service, in particular relating to intelligence studies, security, defence and strategic studies or other job-relevant qualifications.*
>
> *[2] And any intelligence products, intelligence reports, intelligence assessments or intelligence estimates on the following:*
> *a. extremist national security concerns, such as the Com, the Proud Boys, the Base, Action Zealandia, and any other extremist group which is considered to be a potential risk to New Zealand, and*
> *b. the current fuel crisis caused by the US conflict with Iran since the conflict began on 28 February 2026, and*
> *c. relating to weather events which have impacted the country in 2026."*

On 3 June, we wrote to you seeking refinement of Parts 2a and 2c of your request. You responded on 11 June (see **Appendices 1 and 2**). While you did not specify a timeframe for Part 2a, you indicated that, in your view, the relevant timeframe "must be within the last decade." Your response did not address Part 2c.

Part 1

We have interpreted this part of your request as seeking current departmental policies relating to the development of employees, with a focus on staff working in intelligence roles. Identified as relevant to this part of your request is DPMC's People Development Policy, which I have decided to release to you in the **attached** document. I note that this policy is not specific to staff employed in intelligence roles.

Part 2a

As advised during consultation with you, this part of your request does not specify a timeframe and the aspect seeking information on "any other extremist group which is considered to be a potential risk to New Zealand" is very broad.

We appreciate your view that DPMC may be able to identify an appropriate timeframe. However, locating, retrieving and assessing all potentially relevant information, even within "the last decade", would require the review of a very large volume of material to determine what falls within scope.

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By way of example, searches of the National Assessments Bureau's (NAB's) holdings using the phrase "violent extremis*" for the period 2014 to the present returned more than 200 potentially relevant documents. This is unlikely to be exhaustive. Even reviewing those documents to determine whether they are within scope, and then considering any relevant information for release, would however require substantial staff time and resources. In addition, there are only a limited number of staff with the knowledge and access required to undertake this work.

Consistent with our obligation to provide reasonable assistance under the Act, we sought clarification of the timeframe and scope of the information sought. However, you elected not to refine the request.

In these circumstances, I am satisfied that the request, in its current form, would require substantial collation and research and is therefore refused under section 18(f) of the Act. I have also considered whether extending the statutory timeframe for response or imposing a charge would enable the request to be met. Given the breadth of the request and the volume of material requiring review, I do not consider either option would reasonably address the difficulty.

Part 2b

We have interpreted this part of your request as seeking "any intelligence products, intelligence reports, intelligence assessments or intelligence estimates" produced in relation to the current fuel crisis during the period 28 February to 26 May 2026.

Twenty documents have been identified as relevant to this part of your request. I have decided to withhold these documents in full, including their titles and dates, under sections 6(a) and/or 6(b)(i) of the Act, as applicable. Release of this information would be likely to prejudice the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand, while some of the information was supplied in confidence by, or on behalf of, foreign government partners, and its release would be likely to prejudice the continued supply of similar information to the Government of New Zealand.

Part 2c

As advised during consultation with you, DPMC does not produce "intelligence products, intelligence reports, intelligence assessments or intelligence estimates" in relation to domestic weather events. We have interpreted the timeframe for this part of your request to be 1 January to 26 May 2026. I believe, therefore, that this part of your request is more closely connected to the functions of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), which may hold information relevant to this part of your request. Accordingly, I have decided to transfer this part of your request to NEMA under section 14(b) of the Act. I have also extended the timeframe for making this transfer decision under section 15A(1) of the Act, as consultation was required.

Finally, please note that DPMC can respond only insofar as your request seeks information held by DPMC. Ordinarily, we would have considered transferring relevant parts of your request to the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB), the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (NZSIS), and New Zealand Police. However, as we understand that you have also made your request directly to those agencies, we instead refer you to their responses.

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

Jeremy Clarke-Watson
Deputy Chief Executive, National Security and Resilience

Appendix 1 – Refinement request

Tēnā koe [redacted],

We write to seek clarification of some aspects of your recent OIA request.

We understand Part 1 of your request to seek current departmental policies relating to the development of employees, with a focus on staff working in intelligence roles, specifically:

1. *Policies relating to the tertiary education development of intelligence staff in service, including intelligence studies, security, defence and strategic studies, or other job-relevant qualifications.*

We understand Part 2 of your request (subparts a–c, numbered for ease of reference) to seek documents produced by the National Assessments Bureau (NAB), as follows:

2. *Any intelligence products, intelligence reports, intelligence assessments or intelligence estimates on the following:*
    a. *extremist national security concerns, such as the Com, the Proud Boys, the Base, Action Zealandia, and any other extremist group which is considered to be a potential risk to New Zealand, and*
    b. *the current fuel crisis caused by the US conflict with Iran since the conflict began on 28 February 2026, and*
    c. *relating to weather events which have impacted the country in 2026.*

For Part 2a, no timeframe has been specified, and the aspect seeking information on "any other extremist group which is considered to be a potential risk to New Zealand" does not appear to be made with due particularity. As drafted, responding to this part of your request may require substantial collation and research and could therefore engage section 18(f) of OIA.

The timeframes for Parts 2b and 2c appear manageable. However, we note that NAB does not produce documents on domestic weather events.

Information likely to be withheld in full

We also note that documents produced by NAB often contain information that, if released, would be likely to prejudice New Zealand's international relations and national security. Such information is typically withheld in full under one or more grounds in section 6 of the Act. This includes the titles, dates, and topics of the documents.

As an example of the kinds of work NAB produces, some NAB documents from 2019 have been proactively released on DPMC's website here: https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2024-01/pr-nab-documents-far-right-extremism.pdf. If you have not reviewed these, we would encourage you to look at them.

Please provide a refined scope for Part 2a, including a timeframe, and clarify whether you wish to amend Part 2c.

We would appreciate your response by Thursday, 11 June.

Nāku noa, nā,

Ministerial Coordinator

Appendix 2 – Your response

Good morning and thank you for your email.

I'm not quite sure how best to respond to your request for clarification on 2(1). But I will give it a go.

As far as I can tell, parts of the New Zealand Government, perhaps including NAB, identify 'violent extremism' as a security problem and parts of the New Zealand Government, perhaps including NAB, diagnose specific cases of this problem.

In my request, I list the Com, Proud Boys, Base, and Action Zealandia as known case examples of the problem of violent extremism, but I want to know if other groups have been considered but not diagnosed as violent extremism or have been considered but diagnosed as other problems, perhaps as 'terrorism'. And if they have, then I want to see any intelligence products, intelligence reports, intelligence assessments or intelligence estimates on them - unless they must be lawfully withheld. And if they are lawfully withheld, I am especially interested to learn of the reasoning behind the selection of the particular grounds to do so.

I don't understand how it is reasonable to suggest that my request does not appear to be made with due particularity. It is made exclusively with particularly. Nor does it seem reasonable to me at least, but then perhaps I am not a reasonable person, to suggest my request might require substantial collation and research. I think it would merely require asking the very few people at NAB who are responsible for dealing with cases of violent extremism. (Anyway, it is not my job to tell you how to do yours.)

I specified no timeframe for 2a because the recognition / construction of violent extremism is quite new to the New Zealand Government. It is not possible to answer my request by providing information before violent extremism appeared on NAB's radar as a problem of concern. I don't know the date for that but it must be within the last decade?

Thank you for letting me know that you will likely withhold, in full, information I am requesting under part 2. I'd be grateful if you could at least acknowledge that you have considered, on a case by case basis, releasing redacted versions of the documents I seek otherwise it seems that you are withholding official information simply because to do so has become an embedded, arbitrary practice. Which I'm sure is not the case.

Cheers,

DEPARTMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET
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People Development Policy

Original policy approved by:

i-Manage reference	3097628	**Approved by**	Chief Executive
Date originally approved			1/07/2017

Amended policy approved by:

i-Manage version	5	**Contact**	Manager, People, Culture and Communications
Amended version approved by	Deputy Chief Executive, Corporate	**Name** **Signature**	Alan Cassidy
Date amended version approved	23/09/2025	**Date for review**	23/09/2027

Introduction

1. DPMC is committed to supporting its employees with their development and achieving their professional aspirations. DPMC will work with employees in supporting them to grow and extend their skills, knowledge and abilities.
2. To achieve this, every employee will have a development plan in place.
3. This policy sets out DPMC's approach to development.

Purpose

4. The primary purpose of this policy is to provide managers and employees with the principles underpinning DPMC's approach to people development.

Applies to

5. All permanent employees, and fixed-term employees employed by DPMC for periods longer than six months.

6. This policy does not apply to contractors, casual employees, or fixed term employees who are employed for less than six months.

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Definitions

7. The following terms contained in this policy are defined as:

People development	People development covers learning opportunities provided to employees. This could be on the job experiences, experiential learning, secondments, academic study, and training courses.
Part-time study	Part-time study is undertaken in addition to work. It can be taken as one of the following: • Part-time, full year: where students will study up to 2 papers in both 1st and 2nd semesters; or • Part-time, part year: where students will study up to 2 papers in either 1st or 2nd semesters. N.B: Part-time study applies to permanent staff seeking to undertake study at tertiary institutions.
Full-time study	Full-time study is undertaken instead of work. It can be taken as one of the following: • Full-time, full year: where students will study the full complement of papers in both 1st and 2nd semesters; or • Full-time, part year: where students will study the full complement of papers in either 1st or 2nd semesters. N.B: Full-time study applies to permanent staff seeking to undertake either under-graduate or post-graduate study in New Zealand and/or overseas.
Study leave	A period of leave for academic purposes approved by the relevant manager. This may include study days and leave for preparation of examinations.
Study assistance	Study assistance covers support provided to an employee to help them complete DPMC approved study. This could be financial or non-financial.

Policy Detail

Access to people development opportunities

8. Employees will have access to people development opportunities to enhance their skills and further progress their professional development.
9. Access to people development opportunities will be given regardless of an employee's position, educational qualifications, and previous work background.
10. People development opportunities may include, but are not limited to, secondments, training courses, project responsibilities, academic study.
11. DPMC applies the 70/20/10 learning methodology (See paragraph 14 and 15 below).
12. Employees will work with their manager to identify relevant people development opportunities as part of their annual development plan and at other times as appropriate.

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Principles related to people development

13. The following principles apply when considering development to ensure that the opportunity is relevant, appropriate and meeting business requirements:

    - The opportunity will develop the individual's capability and performance to support the achievement of DPMC's workforce and organisation strategy.
    - The opportunity will support the employee's development aspirations.
    - The opportunity will address development needs.
    - The opportunity will support the individual and the organisation while managing the impact on colleagues and customers/stakeholders/the public.
    - Adequate planning will be carried out to ensure the core activities of DPMC business are maintained and that both the staff member and DPMC achieve the full benefits of the arrangement without negatively impacting workload/outputs.

Learning Methodology and the 70:20:10 Framework

14. A holistic framework and ratio that provides an approach to support and facilitate learning where it is most prevalent and most effective.

15. This framework embeds workplace learning as the key to developing a responsive and high performing workforce.

    - 70% Experience - learning and developing through day to day tasks, challenges and practices.
    - 20% Exposure - learning and developing with and through others from informal coaching, exploiting personal networks, and other collaborative and co-operative personal relationships.
    - 10% Education – formal learning, developing through courses and programmes.

Applying for people development opportunities

16. It is both the manager's and the employee's responsibility to identify appropriate opportunities for development.

17. When considering an opportunity as a developmental option the principles related to people development should be considered (paragraph 13).

18. If there is an expense component to the people development the employee is responsible for researching and providing information about the course, expenses, and other financial details required to calculate a budget for the planned expenditure.

19. If an employee is looking at an option that would involve study assistance, they should ensure that the study meets with approved criteria using the Study Assistance Criteria flowchart (Appendix 1), is within their capability and does not compromise their ability to perform their normal daily work requirements.

20. Any people development opportunity will be discussed and agreed between the employee and their manager. If there is an expense component this will need to be approved within the appropriate financial delegations and where appropriate taking into account the resources available in the HR Managed Fund. If the opportunity would incur an expense that exceeds the relevant financial delegation then a memo will need to be prepared for the Chief Executive's or his/her delegated person's (usually the ELT member for the business group) approval detailing the purpose of, and business case for, the opportunity, the cost involved, the return on investment for DPMC and how the business would be supported during absences from the office by the employee.

21. An employee must wait for the appropriate approval in writing before confirming any people development opportunity.

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Study assistance

22. Alongside on-the-job opportunities, it is the Department's policy to support an employee to enhance their career and develop their skills through formal education and training. Study assistance may be provided to help an employee to further their knowledge in fields which will be of benefit to the employee and the Department.

23. Any approval for study assistance is at the discretion of the Chief Executive (or his/her delegate), based on the employee's manager's recommendation. The application will be considered against the principles related to people development.

24. The Chief Executive or his/her delegate may approve all or any of the following:

- A Special Leave request allowing reasonable time off on pay to attend lectures, tutorials and courses at a recognized educational institute.
- Reimbursement of 50% of actual costs of compulsory textbooks or course supplements on the successful completion of the course.
- A refund of enrolment, tuition and examination fees on the successful completion of the course. Receipts and results must be produced to obtain full reimbursement (if approved). Student association fees will not be reimbursed.
- One day's paid study leave in the fortnight prior to each examination, as well as paid study leave for the time required to sit each examinations (for a half or full day as required).

25. Where possible an employee is expected to arrange lectures that minimise time away from work.

Paid Study Awards

26. Full salary awards for university study or overseas study may be granted with approval from the Chief Executive, or his/her delegate, for the purpose of recruiting employees with particular qualifications, or extending an employee's qualifications which are required by the department.

27. Assistance and support to apply for paid study awards can also be sought through a staff member's manager. Funding may come from the People and Culture Development Fund.

Further principles to consider for significant investments in offsite training

28. In addition to those overall investment principles set out in clause 14, where study or course attendance involves total cost (course fees, travel, accommodation etc.) in excess of NZ$20,000, the following principles should also be considered for offsite study:

- Is the employee a current or future star?
- Using the 9-box-grid, future star is defined as someone who "frequently achieves ambitious goals with strong aspiration and demonstration of potential in a variety of new and challenging situations".
- Is the employee's performance consistently outstanding?
- Will this training be presented at a logical point in the employee's professional career?
- What previous investment was made for the employee?
- The investment should be based on future contribution to DPMC and wider public service/sector (i.e. future investment for the sector).
- Affordability.

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Related Policies and documents

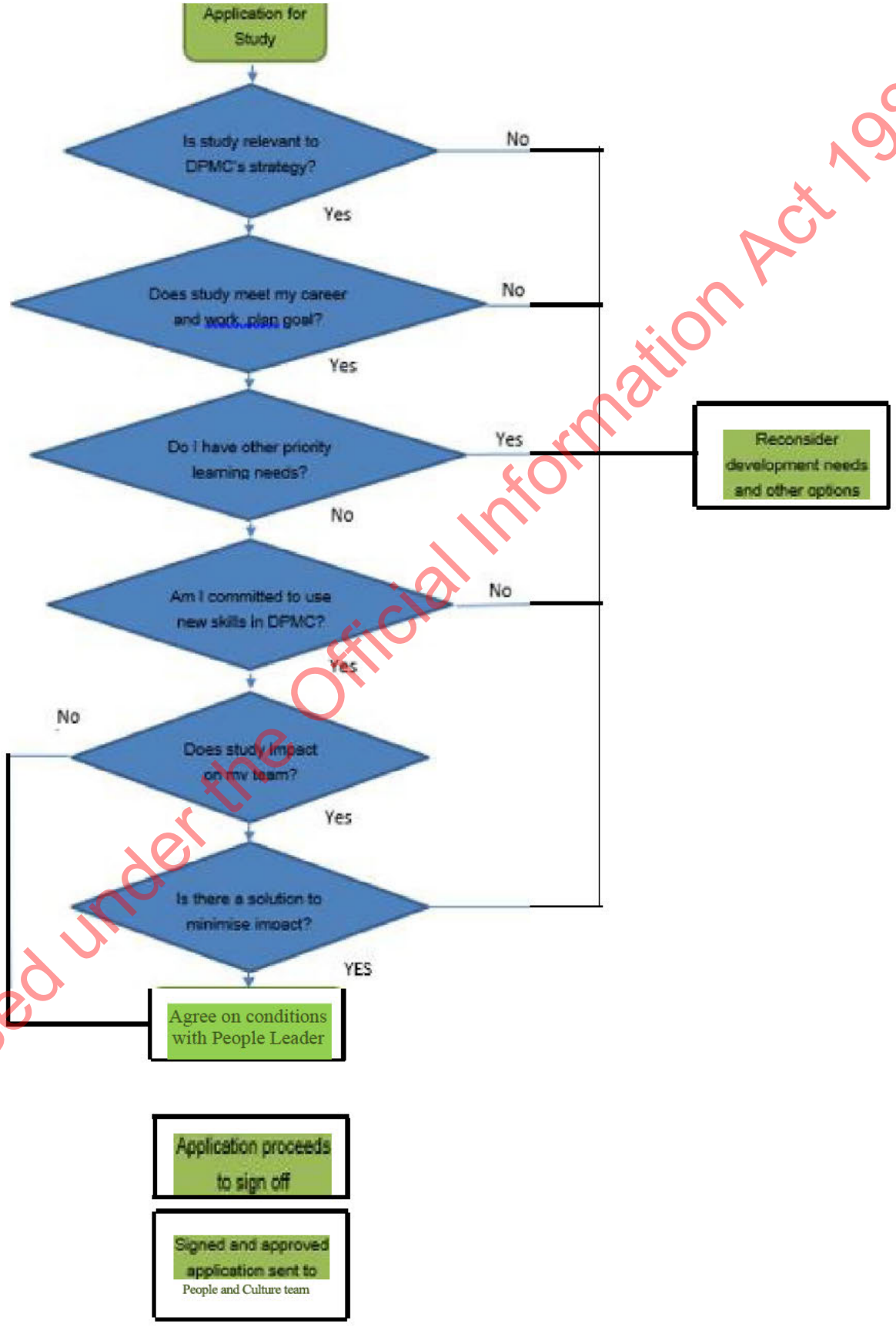
29. Related policies, procedures and documents are:

- Individual Performance and Development Plan
- Performance, Development, and Growth Policy
- Performance, Development and Growth Expectations
- Code of Conduct

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APPENDIX 1

Study Assistance Criteria Flowchart



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Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Chief Executive	• approving the People Development Policy following appropriate consultation • delegate appropriate levels at which study leave, special leave and study refunds in terms of this policy could be approved, and • approve learning and development investments greater than NZ$ 20k.
Executive Leadership Team (ELT)	• approving applications for study leave, special leave and study refunds with the endorsement of the employee's manager as delegated by the CE, and • approving applications for personal development opportunities when necessary and as delegated.
Business Unit / People Leaders	• ensuring that they understand DPMC's People Development Policy and processes, and implement these appropriately in line with employment terms and conditions for individuals • handling individual queries relating to DPMC's People Development Policy and processes from their own employees, consulting with HR to discuss and clarify any areas of uncertainty • consistently applying DPMC's People Development Policy and processes • referring staff to this policy when appropriate, and • endorsing people development requests when appropriate.
DPMC employees	• taking responsibility for their own professional development and working closely with their manager concerning this • seeking development opportunities in accordance with the principles stated in this policy • seeking manager approval before commencing any development • ensuring they attend approved training courses/workshops, and • advising the People and Culture team (if a CASS development course) or the external provider if they are unable to attend, providing reasons for not attending.

People and Culture team	• supporting People Leaders in achieving the aims of DPMC's People Development Policy, through
	  ○ providing support and advice to managers, and
	  ○ processing people development requests.

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