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OIA-2024-5135

8 October 2024

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@stuff.co.nz

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 9 September 2024 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), the following information:

1. *What directives/instructions (verbal or written) have Ministers given your department on how to prepare advice and policy options, since December 2023.*
2. *When was that directive given and by which Minister?*

Extracts from email correspondence sent from the Office of the Minister of Defence to the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) and the Ministry of Defence on how to prepare advice and policy options are provided below.

Sent: Monday, 4 December 2023 10:39 a.m.

Subject: Initial guidance from Minister's Office

*STYLE PREFERANCES [sic]*

*Please note we are yet to receive formal templates (including letterheads) , but will hopefully be in a position to circulate these in the coming week or two. We have included some general guidance we have received to date on the Minister's style preferences – but this is of course subject to change over the coming months as we get established as an office (we will keep teams updated accordingly.)*

*Correspondence*

- *Please note the below preferences for any correspondence that is being drafted by Defence for the Minister's consideration:*
  - *Opening salutation should be 'Dear XXX' and closing salutation should be 'Yours sincerely/faithfully' – a formal tone should always be used;*
  - *Please ensure font is size 12;*
  - *Please avoid using: 'going forward'; 'learnings'; 'wellbeing'.*
  - *Any printing for the Minister should be single sided/in colour and spiral bound.*

*Briefing*

- *Papers to the Minister should have an executive summary on the first page, and should clearly state the purpose of the paper i.e., is the paper seeking a decision or just for noting. Please ensure briefings/submissions are succinct and to the point.*

### Speeches

- *When drafting a speech for the Minister, her preference is to be provided with a formal + scripted introduction and closing of a speech. For the main body of the speech – she will generally draft this herself so it is not necessary to provide her with a scripted body of the speech, instead suggest key facts/data/numbers are included with key messages for her to draw upon as desired.*

Sent: Monday, 8 April 2024 3:56 p.m

Subject: Update from the Minister's Office – 8 April

### BRIEFINGS

*Grateful if you could please ensure that submissions/briefings are limited to four pages (unless by exception), and that the Minister's signature block (Hon Judith Collins KC) is included in the body of the paper (not just the cover sheet, which does not get passed on past Private Secretaries). We appreciate visibility in advance of all material that will be coming to the Office for the Minister's consideration (i.e., through the submissions tracker), particularly when a quick turnaround is required. This enables us to manage defence material going to the Minister in the context of other priorities within the Minister's broader portfolios/Ministerial commitments.*

### CABINET PAPERS

*Grateful if teams can continue to ensure that Cabinet papers are provided to the Office 4 weeks before the Cabinet Committee date. Please also ensure that relevant defence officials are available to support the Minister outside Cabinet Committee rooms for all Defence papers. Please reach out to us if you do not have access to the Beehive and need to be escorted upstairs.*

Sent: Monday, 13 May 2024 11:53 a.m.

Subject: Update from the Office of the Minister of Defence – May 2024

- *Not everything needs to be transacted as a briefing. The Office is happy for material being provided for awareness to be an email/transacted through P/Secs.*
- *Briefings to be short, size 12.*
- *Please ensure KC is used at all times.*

Sent: Friday, 21 June 2024 5:05 p.m.

Subject: OMINDEF Update

- *Please remember to provide updates to the Submissions Schedule, and if submissions will require quick turnarounds do get in touch with the P/Secs sooner rather than later so we can ensure these are prioritised. If there are specific dates that decisions are required by, be sure to indicate this on the coversheet and in the schedule.*
- *When Cabinet papers are planned, do take the Minister's international travel schedule into account (attached for reference). If decisions are time sensitive and have to go to a Committee that the Minister won't be able to attend, please give us a call in the first instance so we can coordinate another Minister to take the paper.*
  - *And a reminder that Cabinet papers are due to the Office at least one month before Cabinet Committee, to ensure the Minister has sufficient time to review them.*

Sent: Wednesday, 7 August 2024 4:02 p.m.

Subject: Update from the Minister's Office

- *Please ensure that any recommendations that aren't noting have a 'yes / no' option for the Minister to circle. We've received several subs recently that don't have this, and have been fixing it ourselves, but this is time consuming and when we can't fix it (i.e. on hardcopies) it does get commented on by the Minister.*
- *Can a consistent template for submissions be used. We're agnostic on what template this is, but it would be great if everything looked the same.*
- *The Office has emphasised to us that both submissions and Cabinet papers should be as concise as possible.*
  - *For Cabinet papers in particular, it was noted that key messages need to be made clear up front (this feedback was given to all portfolios, not Defence specifically).*

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](http://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

**AJ WOODS**

Air Commodore

Chief of Staff HQNZDF