

Hon Nicola Willis

Minister of Finance
Minister for Economic Growth
Minister for Social Investment



22 June 2026

Marcus

fyi-request-34764-6746483f@requests.fyi.org.nz

Ref: 026-2026EGOIA

Dear Marcus

Thank you for your email of 21 May 2026 to my office requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

I would like to request a copy of the following briefings received in your capacity as the Minister for Economic Growth:

1. *BRIEFING-REQ-0028117 MBIE Artificial Intelligence Work Programme Update*
2. *BRIEFING-REQ-0029308 Update on Emerging Risks in Plastics Supply Chains*
3. *BRIEFING-REQ-0028722 Playcentre Aotearoa's eligibility for All of Government Contracts*

Please find attached:

- *BRIEFING-REQ-0028117 MBIE Artificial Intelligence Work Programme Update*
- *BRIEFING-REQ-0028722 Playcentre Aotearoa's eligibility for All of Government Contracts.*

Some information has been withheld under the following sections of the Act:

- 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons, and
- 9(2)(g)(i), to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any public service agency or organisation in the course of their duty.

I am advised that *BRIEFING-REQ-0029308 Update on Emerging Risks in Plastics Supply Chains* is being proactively released by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and will be available at www.mbie.govt.nz. I am therefore refusing this part of your request under section 18(d) of the Act, as the information is or soon will be publicly available.

Some material may be withheld from this briefing under the following grounds:

- 6(a), as the making available of that information would be likely to prejudice the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand;
- 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons;
- 9(2)(b)(ii), to protect information where the making available of the information would

be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information;

- 9(2)(f)(iv), to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials; and
- 9(2)(g)(i), to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any public service agency or organisation in the course of their duty.

I do not consider that the withholding of this information is outweighed by public interest considerations in making the information available.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Hon Nicola Willis
Minister for Economic Growth



AIDE MEMOIRE

MBIE Artificial Intelligence Work Programme Update

Date:	13 March 2026	Priority:	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	Tracking number:	BRIEFING-REQ-0028117

Information for Minister(s)

Hon Nicola Willis
Minister for Economic Growth

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)

Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Jen Nathan	Deputy Secretary (Acting), Corporate and Digital Shared Services	s 9(2)(a)	✓

The following departments/agencies have been consulted

Minister's office to complete:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Approved | ☐ Declined |
| ☐ Noted | ☐ Needs change |
| ☐ Seen | ☐ Overtaken by Events |
| ☐ See Minister's Notes | ☐ Withdrawn |

Comments



AIDE MEMOIRE

MBIE Artificial Intelligence Work Programme Update

Date:	13 March 2026	Priority:	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	Tracking number:	BRIEFING-REQ-0028117

Purpose

This paper provides an update on MBIE's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Work Programme.

Jennifer Nathan
Deputy Secretary (Acting)
Corporate and Digital Shared Services, MBIE

13 / 03 / 2026

MBIE's approach to AI

1. There are two major areas of opportunity for MBIE to implement AI:
 - a. Personal productivity: 'enable and encourage'
 - b. Business process or technology improvement and innovation: 'systematically re-engineer'
2. The sections below provide a high-level summary of AI implementation across MBIE in the near and longer term. A full list of work is also provided in Annex One, alongside our *AI and Data Empowered Workforce Plan* in Annex Two.

At a glance: what is delivering now

3. AI is already in active use across MBIE and delivering productivity uplift:
 - **Copilot Chat** has been released to all staff, with approximately **4,000 active monthly users**, supporting drafting, research, summarisation and day-to-day productivity.
 - **Microsoft 365 Copilot** is available via people-leader approval, with approximately **1,000 active monthly users** using AI directly in Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and Teams.



- **AI capability uplift is underway:** more than **1,000 staff** have completed MBIE's AI introductory training, with over **90% indicating they are likely to apply the skills** in their work.
- 4. These tools are already reducing time spent on routine tasks and enabling staff to focus on higher-value work.
- 5. The statistics that show MBIE's Microsoft 365 Copilot license usage and CoPilot Chat usage are in Annex Three.

What will change in the next 90 days

- 6. The following initiatives move from trial or build into rollout or implementation between March and June 2026.
 - **Ministerial correspondence**
A Copilot-enabled trial has been completed and we're **planning for rollout from April 2026**, with the aim of improving quality and reducing response times.
 - **Ministerial services**
Deploying AI into an existing system to log and track Ministerial Correspondence, OIAs and Written Parliamentary Questions. **Work starts March 2026, with implementation expected by June 2026**, reducing manual data entry and improving accuracy.
 - **Occupational Licensing Platform**
AI-enabled checks at the point of application submission (including photo and certification validation). **Development is expected to be completed by June 2026**, delivering efficiency gains, faster processing and improved customer experience.
 - **AI Learning Hub**
A structured AI learning pathway and assessment tool for staff. **Expected to launch in early June 2026**, supporting safe and confident uptake of AI across MBIE.

What is being scaled next (2026+ pipeline)

- 7. MBIE is prioritising AI use cases that deliver **clear service or operational impact**, including:
 - **Consumer Protection digital assistants**, designed to reduce low-value enquiries and improve 24/7 access to tailored consumer information (design, testing and proof of concept completed in early 2026).
 - **Contact Centre AI**, including voice-enabled IVR and AI-assisted quality monitoring and insights, with pilots and phased rollout planned through 2026.
 - **Immigration and visa processing analytics**, focusing initially on internal search, decision support and risk modelling to improve efficiency and focus staff effort where it adds the most value.
- 8. A full pipeline of initiatives is provided in Annex One.

Guardrails

- 9. MBIE is taking a deliberate approach to AI, scaling low-risk productivity tools quickly, while applying stronger governance and oversight on high-impact system-level AI implementation.



10. An internal AI Council has provided enterprise-level guidance, and an AI Policy is in development to support ethical and responsible use.

Tracking progress

11. We are tracking progress in AI adoption using the following measures:
- Uptake of AI productivity tools (licensing and active usage).
 - Workforce capability uplift through training and learning pathways.
 - Movement of priority initiatives from pilot to rollout and scale.

Annexes

Annex One: AI Implementation at MBIE

Annex Two: AI and Data Empowered Workforce plan

Annex Three: MBIE's Microsoft 365 Copilot License Usage and CoPilot Chat Usage



Annex One: AI Implementation at MBIE

Smaller scale pilots

These initiatives have not yet reached the stage of scaling, but as they demonstrate value, they will be prioritised for broader implementation and integrated into more substantial process redesigns.

Area	Application	Expected Impact	Status/timing
Ministerial correspondence	Identifying where Copilot can add value for MCs and assess the impact on response quality, timeliness, and user experience.	Improvements in quality and reduce the time it takes to respond.	Trial completed in January. Awaiting report from Victoria University and then we will begin planning to roll out in April.
Submissions analysis	Accelerate the analysis of submissions from public consultations, currently limited to small data sets.	Faster analysis of submissions to support policy decisions.	Ongoing.
Immigration services	AI agent that improves internal search capabilities for immigration instructions, policies, and procedures.	Efficiency and productivity gains.	Ongoing.
Immigration Services	Automatic translation of foreign language documents attached to visa applications	Improved customer satisfaction	Two trials completed; Investigating options using different technology in a controlled environment to progress this initiative.
Cyber security	AI solution provides support for security professionals across incident response, threat hunting, intelligence gathering, and posture management.	Enhance MBIE cyber security protection through advanced AI-driven threat detection.	Subject to a successful proof of value, progressing in FY26-27.
Consumer Protection	Upgrade the existing website by integrating AI assistants and chatbots, including a smart "Consumer Know How Assistant" that delivers customised, rights-based content tailored to consumer issues.	Reduction in call volumes – specifically low/no value enquiries. Reduction in customer effort. Improved accessibility with bots available 24/7.	Proof of concept concluded as desired outcomes cannot be met by this solution
Occupational Licensing Platform	Automated AI checks at the point of submission: (1) validating photo quality against passport-style requirements (clear face, plain background, no edits), and (2) verifying certification for correct identity and proper witnessing.	Customer Experience uplift. Efficiency gains. Reduction in call volumes. Reduced manual work tasks. Reduced processing times.	Statement of Work is expected to be finalised in February. Development is expected to be completed in June.



Area	Application	Expected Impact	Status/timing
Contact Centre (Genesys Auto QM)	Uses AI-driven analytics to automatically evaluate 100% of customer interactions—such as voice calls, chats, and emails—against predefined quality criteria.	Automates interaction scoring at scale, delivering consistent, unbiased quality evaluations that frees up supervisors for coaching and improve customer experience.	Paused pending the outcome of the Operative Intelligence Proof of Concept.
Contact Centre (Genesys Automated knowledge)	automatically highlighting relevant knowledge articles, transcribing conversations for easy reference, and offering tailored scripts and next best action recommendations.	Instant access to accurate, AI-curated answers, reducing handle time, improving first-contact resolution, and delivering consistent customer experiences.	Pilot planned for June 2026 (Q4 FY 25/26)
Contact Centre (Genesys Voice Enabled IVR)	Uses speech recognition and natural language processing to interact with callers using voice commands instead of keypad inputs	More accurate and precise routing of calls to the right skilled targets; reduced call transfers; reduction in call handling time; will reduce operational complexity (number of queues).	SoW received March 2026. On track for go live mid July 2026 (Q1 FY26/27)
Contact Centre (Voice and chat bots)	AI-powered bots to enable self-service in both the digital (on-line) and voice (IVR) channels.	Reduction in call volumes – specifically low/no value enquiries. Improved accessibility with bots available 24/7.	Q1 FY 26/27 - live in July as a base capability and self-serve components will be added over time.
Contact Centre (Operative Intelligence (OI))	Operative Intelligence uses large language models to deliver actionable insights from customer interactions.	Reduce contact drivers, optimize processes, and improve efficiency and customer experience.	On track for deployment from the start of Q1 FY 2026/27.

Larger scale programmes

MBIE also has an active log of larger scale initiatives that are proceeding in a more formalised project framework relative to the size and complexity of the initiative.

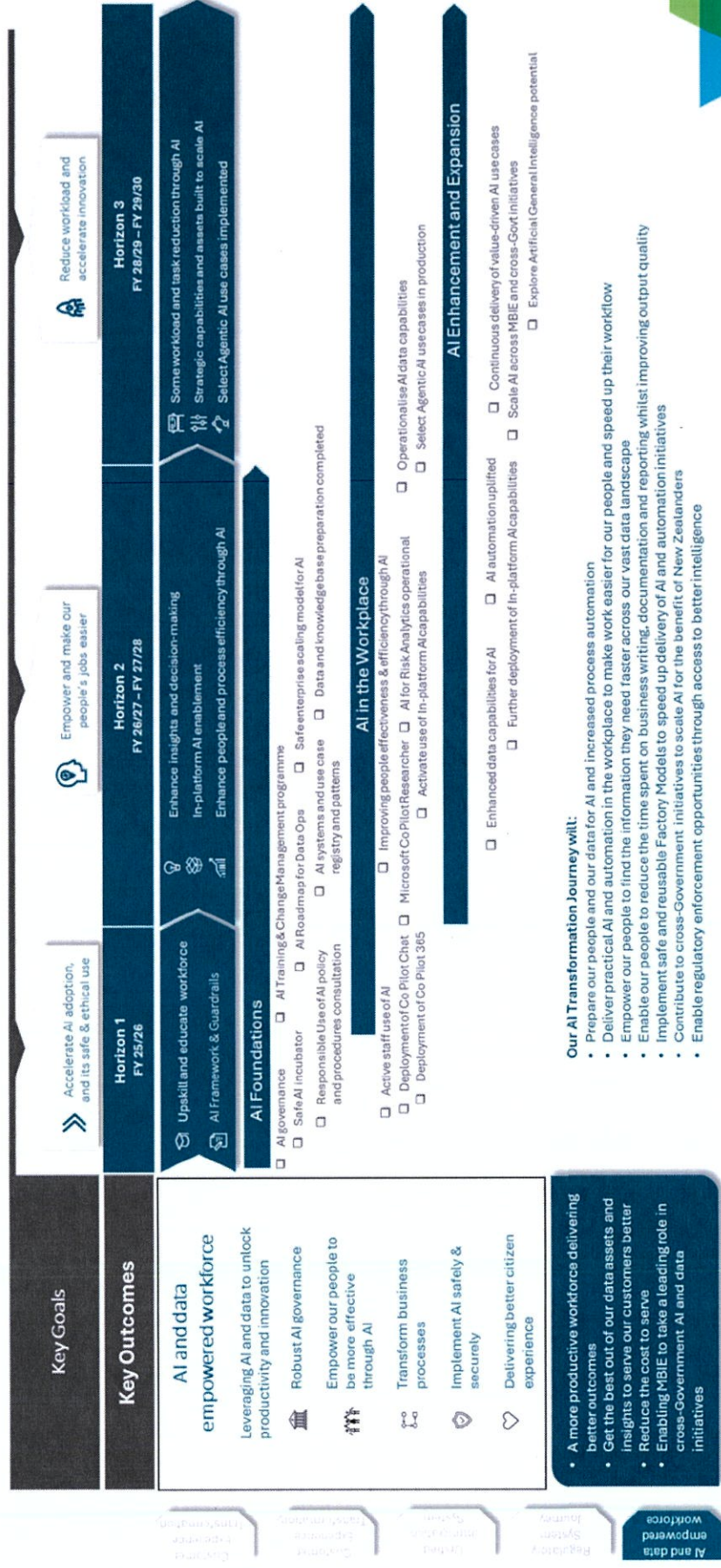
Area	Application	Expected impact	Status/timing
Contact Centre (Genesys)	AI assistant designed to enhance service centre productivity and streamline customer interactions. Call transcript summarises the call, provides standardisation and consistency.	Efficiency gain, reduced times, standardised notes.	A second pilot group has been identified and we're working with stakeholders, with deployment planned for Q4 FY26 using the Genesys Agent Copilot.



Area	Application	Expected impact	Status/timing
Visa processing	Probabilistic modelling, to enable automation of low-risk applications and focus IO time on more complex cases	Efficiency gains reduced manual work tasks.	Q3 FY2027: automation enabled.
	Decision intelligence and knowledge management tools, to aid in identifying the most relevant factors to decide visa applications	Delivers quality and speed gains.	Delivery by Q3 FY27/28,
Tenancy Services	Tenant self-service authentication. AI Virtual Assistant to answer customer queries.	Improved transaction processing times. Reduced customer queries.	Pilot completed. Implementation of next steps is dependent on the delivery of tenant self-service authentication functionality (June 2026) and confirmation of the AI Governance Framework (timing to be confirmed). Implementation options are included in the 2026/27 Bond system enhancement roadmap.
Ministerial services (Nexus)	Logging and tracking of Ministerial Correspondence, OIAs, Written Parliamentary Questions.	Reduce manual data entry, improve accuracy, and free up our people to focus on higher-value work.	Contract signed with the vendor, with work starting in March 2026 and implementation expected by June 2026.
Registries	Digitisation of processes including validation of company name reservation, validation of documents uploaded and generation of correspondence.	Reduce manual interventions, reduce to time and effort require to register a company, reduce back-office administration costs.	Part of the Company Register replacement, commenced in February 2026, with go-live planned for early CY 2028.

Annex Two: AI and data empowered workforce plan

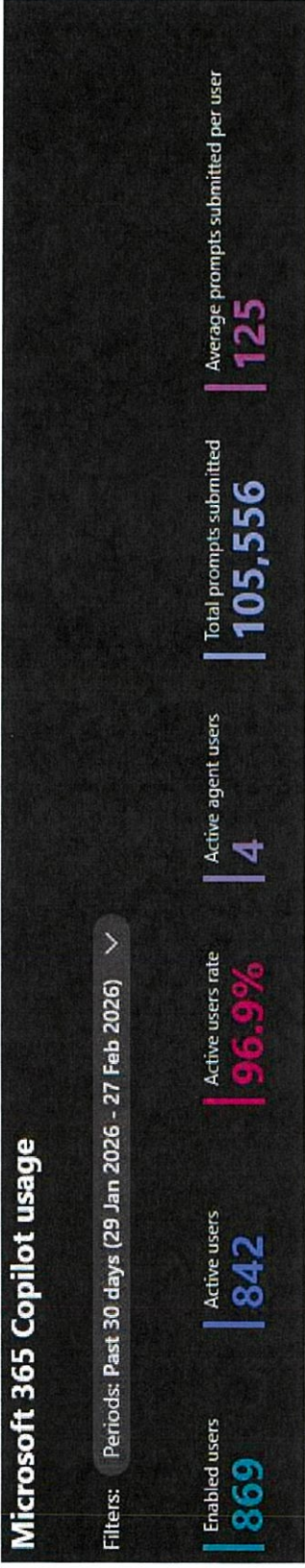
AI and data empowered workforce—Our AI transformation journey will accelerate the safe implementation and use of AI and automation in the workplace and across the broader organisation. Our initiatives in this area aims to deliver better service and outcomes for our customers by speeding up processes and saving time and effort on time-consuming and error-prone activities. This is expected to result in increased people and process effectiveness and produce higher quality output more consistently. Through our AI Automation journey, we will develop reusable AI assets and tools to accelerate delivery of AI initiatives, and we will build the subject matter expertise needed for MBIE to take a leading role on the cross-Government AI and automation initiatives.



Annex Three: MBIE Microsoft 365 Copilot License Usage and CoPilot Chat Usage

1. Microsoft 365 Copilot License Usage

Last 30 Days:



2. Microsoft 365 Copilot Chat Usage

Last 30 Days:





BRIEFING

Playcentre Aotearoa's eligibility for All-of-Government contracts

Date:	8 April 2026	Priority:	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	Tracking number:	REQ-0028722

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Nicola Willis Minister for Economic Growth	Note Playcentre Aotearoa does not meet Cabinet's criteria for eligibility for All-of-Government contracts, and deeming it eligible is likely to create undue fiscal and market risks for government Agree that due to the fiscal, financial, and competition risks MBIE has identified Playcentre Aotearoa is not given eligibility for All-of-Government contracts Agree that MBIE work with Playcentre Aotearoa to give them access to the benefits and savings available through the NGO Procurement Initiative	24 April 2026

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Michael Alp	General Manager, New Zealand Government Procurement, MBIE	s 9(2)(a)	✓
Richard Lee	Head of Strategy, Policy and Governance, NZGP, MBIE	s 9(2)(a)	

The following departments/agencies have been consulted
NA

Minister's office to complete:

☐ Approved

☐ Declined

☐ Noted

☐ Needs change

☐ Seen

☐ Overtaken by Events

☐ See Minister's Notes

☐ Withdrawn

Comments



BRIEFING

Playcentre Aotearoa's eligibility for All-of-Government contracts

Date:	8 April 2026	Priority:	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	Tracking number:	REQ-0028722

Purpose

This briefing responds to a request for more information on, and provides advice about, Playcentre Aotearoa's application for eligibility to All-of-Government contracts.

Recommended action

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment recommends that you:

- a **Note** Playcentre Aotearoa does not meet Cabinet's criteria for eligibility for All-of-Government contracts, and deeming it eligible is likely to create undue fiscal and market risks for government

Noted

- b **Agree** that due to the fiscal, financial, and competition risks MBIE has identified Playcentre Aotearoa is not given eligibility for All-of-Government contracts

Agree / Disagree

- c **Note** Playcentre Aotearoa is likely to meet the criteria for the NGO Procurement Initiative, which provides similar benefits to All-of-Government contracts, without creating fiscal risks for government

Noted

- d **Agree** that MBIE work with Playcentre Aotearoa to give them access to the benefits and savings available through the NGO Procurement Initiative

Agree / Disagree

- e **Agree** that MBIE will provide you with a response letter to Playcentre Aotearoa that reflects your decisions

Agree / Disagree

Michael Alp
General Manager,
New Zealand Government Procurement, MBIE
08 / 04 / 2026

Hon Nicola Willis
Minister for Economic Growth

..... / /

Background

1. Playcentre Aotearoa provides licensed early childhood education (ECE) to around 8,400 children in its nearly 400 playcentres. In 2022 it voted to centralise the financial operations of Playcentre Aotearoa in the governing trust, taking some of the administrative burden off individual centres.
2. In December 2020⁵, following earlier engagement with MBIE, Playcentre Aotearoa wrote to you seeking to access to All-of-Government contracts because it receives the majority of its operational budget through government funding and wants to maximise the value of this funding. Playcentre Aotearoa is not automatically eligible to access the All-of-Government contracts.

The eligibility criteria for all-of-government contracts were set by Cabinet in 2013

3. All-of-Government contracts are centralised contracts for common goods and services. They cover a range of goods and services, such as electricity, recruitment and legal services and motor vehicles. They are intended to save money by leveraging the collective purchasing power of government, reduce administration and tendering costs and standardise procurement practice across government to reduce costs for suppliers.
4. In 2013 Cabinet agreed which entities are automatically eligible to use All-of-Government contracts: wholly owned government entities in the public sector, for example government departments, crown entities, state-owned enterprises, and local authorities.
5. At that time Cabinet also agreed criteria (set out in Annex One) that the Procurement System Leader could use to assess whether other organisations can purchase through All-of-Government contracts [SEC Min (13) 19 refers]. If an organisation is not automatically eligible it can apply for eligibility and MBIE will assess it against Cabinet's criteria.

Playcentre Aotearoa's primary revenue source is from the Ministry of Education funding

6. Playcentre Aotearoa's revenue is predominantly derived from government sources, with approximately 60 percent of funding provided by the Ministry of Education. The organisation receives additional government grants and fees, while a smaller proportion of revenue is generated through the sale of goods and services and voluntary contributions from parents and caregivers.

In January 2025 Playcentre Aotearoa unsuccessfully applied to become an Eligible Agency

7. In January 2025, Playcentre Aotearoa applied to New Zealand Government Procurement (NZGP) for eligibility to access All-of-Government contracts. While acknowledging it did not meet the Cabinet-approved eligibility criteria, Playcentre Aotearoa sought discretionary eligibility on the basis that it is a not-for-profit organisation regulated and largely funded by the Ministry of Education and provides licensed early childhood education services nationwide.
8. Following Playcentre Aotearoa's application for eligibility in January 2025, in February 2025 NZGP (on behalf of MBIE) engaged directly with Playcentre Aotearoa about eligibility for All-of-Government contracts. This included email correspondence and meeting to discuss the eligibility criteria. Through this engagement, MBIE advised Playcentre Aotearoa that it could explore whether Playcentre Aotearoa met the requirements for participation in the NGO Procurement Initiative, subject to confirmation of relevant information.
9. Public funding is not a criterion for eligibility, and many similarly funded education organisations are not eligible agencies. NZGP assessed the application in line with Cabinet direction and concluded there were no exceptional circumstances to justify eligibility. NZGP notified Playcentre Aotearoa on 31 July 2025 that discretion would not be exercised.

10. To date, Playcentre Aotearoa has indicated a preference to pursue eligibility for All-of-Government contracts. Playcentre Aotearoa subsequently wrote to the you on 15 December 2025 seeking your support to be made an Eligible Agency by Cabinet (letter attached as Annex Two).

Deeming Playcentre Aotearoa an Eligible Agency is likely to create undue fiscal risks for government

11. MBIE has declined to make Playcentre an Eligible Agency because it does not meet the Cabinet criteria to be deemed an Eligible Agency established in 2013 (Annex One refers) and would create large uncapped fiscal risks to the Crown, undermine competition and compromise the All-of-Government contracting framework.

It would set a precedent of much wider private sector eligibility, creating fiscal risks and distorting markets

12. Deeming Playcentre Aotearoa to be an Eligible Agency to maximise the buying power of its government funding would create a precedent. This decision would likely set the expectation of extending eligibility to the large number of other private sector organisations that also receive Government funding. These range from large budget screen productions and energy, mineral and irrigation projects to research and development, medical providers and private childcare. Even if the precedent is limited to other not-for profits, large entities such as community housing providers, primary health organisations, national sporting organisations and private schools may also seek access on this basis.
13. The precedent established by granting Playcentre Aotearoa access creates significant risks for the government. It is not from Playcentre alone, but from the fiscal exposure from the large number of entities that could apply for eligibility on the same basis.

Wider eligibility creates fiscal risks for the Crown

14. In June 2022 the Minister of Finance (the Minister) agreed to provide suppliers who become parties to All-of-Government and property common capability (PCC) agreements with a 10-year guarantee, subject to certain conditions, under section 65ZD of the Public Finance Act 1989. In September 2025 the Minister extended the duration of this guarantee to the duration of the contract.
15. For the All-of-Government contracts that include this guarantee, suppliers may take action against MBIE instead of taking enforcement action against the relevant Participating Agency (e.g. for a failure by that Participating Agency to pay). This guarantee was not intended to cover liabilities for private sector entities, and doing so exposes the Crown to a large uncapped contingent liability. s 9(2)(g)(i)

Wider eligibility risks undermining competition and creating a perception of anticompetitive behaviour

16. The precedent this would set for widespread private-sector eligibility creates substantial risk of market distortion. Significantly expanding eligibility for All-of-Government contracts to the private sector will reduce competition and innovation by limiting economic opportunities for suppliers that are not parties to these contracts.
17. MBIE would need to seek further advice from the Commerce Commission on the impact of wider eligibility on competition if the contracts are seen as a misuse of market power. If they have the effect of fixing prices for key goods and services, or allocating customers to certain

suppliers All-of-Government contracts may be considered cartel behaviour which is prohibited by section 30 of the Commerce Act 1986.

Playcentre Aotearoa would not need to follow the Rules that underpin the All-of-Government contracts model

18. Private entities are not required to follow the procurement Rules, including requirements for prompt payment, non-discrimination and specific requirements for how to conduct secondary procurement, to ensure the process is fair and transparent for suppliers.
19. Private sector eligibility is likely to see an increase in the amount of secondary procurement under All-of-Government contracts that does not comply with the Rules. Reduced Rule compliance would undermine the integrity of All-of-Government contracts and suppliers may be less willing to participate in these contracts, which would decrease cost savings and efficiencies gained from them.

Assessing wider eligibility would result in an ongoing workload for Cabinet

20. Deeming Playcentre Aotearoa eligible would encourage more entities to seek Ministerial intervention to make them eligible, rather than relying on the MBIE-led process set by Cabinet. Currently, MBIE receives approximately 5-10 discretionary eligibility requests per year. We would expect applications to increase if Playcentre Aotearoa sets a precedent that Ministerial intervention is a viable pathway to discretionary eligibility. Assessing individual applications for eligibility draws on Ministerial and Cabinet resources.

Wider eligibility creates financial risks to New Zealand Government Procurement

21. Many of the functions of New Zealand Government Procurement (NZGP) are funded by an administration fee charged when agencies use All-of-Government contracts. As private entities are not required to follow the Rules, it is not clear if they would pay the administration fees as part of the AoG contracts. Delivering services for entities that are not contributing to the cost of those services would put pressure on NZGP's financial sustainability.

Playcentre Aotearoa is likely to be able to access similar benefits through the NGO Procurement Initiative

22. The NGO Procurement Initiative enables eligible non-government organisations to access comparable pricing to All-of-Government contracts where suppliers have agreed to offer those rates. The initiative operates outside the All-of-Government contracting framework and does not include the Crown guarantees that apply to All-of-Government contracts.
23. Based on information provided, Playcentre Aotearoa is likely to meet the eligibility requirements for the NGO Procurement Initiative, subject to providing the necessary documentation.
24. Participation under the initiative depends on supplier agreement and involves contracting directly between the organisation and the supplier. Accessing contracts through the NGO Procurement Initiative would allow Playcentre Aotearoa to benefit from competitive pricing while avoiding the fiscal, financial, and competition risks associated with granting eligibility to All-of-Government contracts.

Next steps

25. As it does not meet the Cabinet Criteria for eligibility and is likely to create uncapped fiscal risks, distort markets and create undue risks for Government, MBIE cannot deem Playcentre Aotearoa to be an Eligible Agency. Any decision to deem Playcentre Aotearoa eligible would need to be made by Cabinet.

26. Due to the risks of deeming Playcentre Aotearoa to be an Eligible Agency, MBIE does not recommend seeking Cabinet agreement to make it eligible. Instead, MBIE recommends that, should Playcentre wish to do so, we work with Playcentre Aotearoa to ensure they can access the benefits and savings available through the NGO Procurement Initiative.
27. MBIE will provide your office with a draft response letter to Playcentre Aotearoa that reflects your decisions.

List of Annexes

Annex One: Discretionary eligibility for All-of-Government contracts

Annex Two: Correspondence from Playcentre Aotearoa

Annex One: Discretionary eligibility for AoG contracts

Criteria for discretionary eligibility set by Cabinet

28. In 2013 Cabinet set out the expectations for how All-of-Government (AoG) contracts would be administered [SEC Min (13) 19 refers].
29. The Eligibility Criteria for AoG contracts are that:
 - a. it is 100% owned (directly or indirectly) by central or local government;
 - b. central or local government has the power to appoint or remove all its directors, or such number of directors as together hold a majority of the voting rights at meetings of the board; and
 - c. it consolidates its financial information with central or local government as a “controlled entity” with no reportable “minority interest”.
30. Cabinet also directed that in exceptional circumstances, the Procurement System Leader may also allow other organisations to be deemed an Eligible Agency, provided such a decision:
 - a. supports improved state sector productivity and efficiency, increased opportunities for New Zealand businesses to participate in government contracts and releases fiscal savings for use in other priority areas; and
 - b. is consistent with Cabinet’s expectation that AoG contracts deliver the best result for the use of taxpayer and ratepayer dollars, but will not distort markets or create undue risk for government

Entities granted discretionary eligibility for All-of-Government contracts

MBIE has granted three non-governmental organisations discretionary eligibility for All-of-Government contracts. All three operate on a not-for-profit basis and have specific, unique regulatory circumstances that justified their inclusion:

- **SPCA:** The SPCA is responsible for partial administration of the Animal Welfare Act (in conjunction with MPI); there was explicit support from the CE of MPI for the SPCA being granted access. The SPCA fulfils a regulatory role through its inspectorate function and is the only non-government organisation in NZ with law enforcement powers and statutory compliance role.
- **Wellington Free Ambulance:** The Wellington Free Ambulance (WFA) is part of the Emergency Services Network with Police, Fire and Civil Defence and needed access to the TaaS contract. TaaS suppliers are ‘lifeline utilities’ Civil Defence Emergency Management Act and the ambulances have to comply with the same statute. There is a critical interplay between these organisations in the case of emergency management, under statute, and it would have been an unnecessary risk to have the WFA on a different arrangement with telecommunications companies, specifically, risk on the certainty of operation and consistent standards, upgrades, and other operational functions.
- **Workforce Development Councils:** Workforce Development Councils (and their replacement Industry Skills Boards) have a public, quasi-regulatory role, similar to other eligible agencies. They establish key education standards and the existence of Workforce Development Councils depends on the Government – they can be established and disestablished by a Minister.

Cabinet has separately deemed one entity eligible

- **Not-for-profit charter Schools:** Not-for-profit Charter schools did not meet the eligibility criteria, however Cabinet specifically agreed their eligibility as part of the Government's decision-making around charter school policy to ensure they could better compete with state schools. At that time Cabinet limited eligibility to charter schools that were operated on a not-for-profit basis to ensure that the contracts were not used to subsidise commercial activities.

Annex Two: correspondence from Playcentre Aotearoa

From: Bridget Stewart - Procurement Manager <Bridget.Stewart@playcentre.org.nz>

Sent: Monday, 15 December 2025 11:47 AM

To: Hon Nicola Willis <Nicola.Willis@parliament.govt.nz>

Subject: Playcentre Aotearoa - AoG Eligibility Request

Good morning Minister Willis,

I just want to preface this by saying I apologise that this is coming so late in the year and understand if this doesn't get picked up until next year.

By way of Introduction, my name is Bridget and I took up the newly established role of National Procurement Manager at Playcentre Aotearoa in January 2025.

We have spent the best part of this year centralising our 401 Playcentres that operate nationwide. Part of this journey is to realise savings and benefits through the new procurement function.

I have been undertaking category analysis and already there are alignments with many of the All of Government (AoG) Contracts – Office Supplies, Travel Management, Electricity, our vast Property Portfolio (some owned by the Ministry of Education), ICT, Vehicles etc.

To realise incredible savings, it made sense to apply for eligibility to access AoG Contracts.

Unfortunately, we do not meet the criteria, so based on the advice on the Procurement website I submitted a letter (attached) and had a number of meetings around why we should still be considered.

I understand we likely fall under the NGO initiative, however I noted there are other Charitable Trusts listed as "other eligible agencies" who are able to access AoG contracts, Open Syndicated contracts and Common Capability contracts.

70% of our funding comes from the Ministry of Education, so it makes sense that we should be looking to realise cost savings of taxpayer funded money, especially in these times, and I know AoG can help us do that.

You will see from the email below, that NZGP denied eligibility to access the All of Government contracts.

I was trying to find some information online this morning and happened to stumble upon the press release (also attached) that the charter schools have been given access to AoG. Based on this I thought I would write to see if there was anything you or your team could do to help Playcentre Aotearoa access these contracts as well. I would love the opportunity to provide more information if required as well.

As mentioned, I appreciate this time of year isn't ideal but hope to hear back in the New Year.

Thank you for your time, hope you have a Merry Christmas and a wonderful (and well earned) break.

Kind Regards,

Bridget

Bridget Stewart | National Procurement Manager

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