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New Zealand Defence Force
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New Zealand

OIA-2026-5869

21st

July 2026

Rev. Hamish Kirk

fyi-request-35041-0c9ac11d@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Rev. Kirk

I refer to your email of 8 July 2026 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), information following a letter you received from the Minister of Defence. The various parts of your request are addressed below:

- 1) *How long did the review take?*
- 2) *Apart from the Principal Defence Chaplain (PDC), how many other chaplains had input into the review and what was their rank?*
- 3) *Did any members of ChDAC have input into the review?*

I acknowledge that the wording of the letter may have caused some inadvertent confusion. I provide this explanation and context to ensure clarity.

A 'further review' in the context of the letter dated 28 April 2026 and signed by Minister of Defence, Hon Chris Penk, refers to the review of the applicable orders and policy relating to NZDF Chaplaincy, as well as a review of the unit culture. This review was directed by the Chief of Defence Force, Tony Davies, who informed you of his decision in his letter of apology to you dated 4 March 2025.

The abovementioned review was titled People Capability Portfolio Minute 64/2025 Review into Orders, Policy and Culture of NZDF Chaplaincy (the Review). A copy of the Review was enclosed as part of response OIA-2025-5596 and PA-2026-0256, and sent to you on 8 December 2025.

- 4) *What relevant actions were taken as a result of the review?*
- 5) *What changes are there in Chaplaincy Leadership since the review?*
- 6) *What practices have changed or new practices been instigated since the review?*
- 5) *I request a copy of any changes to rules, procedures, DFOs, Chaplain regulations, handbooks that have occurred as a result of relevant actions taken, as well as the change in leadership and practices intimated to the Hon Chris Penk by the NZDF.*

With respect to the above parts of your request, the Review noted that chaplaincy policy and orders had been strengthened and updated following the concerns raised in the JAG Investigation Report (your complaint). These changes are specified in sections 3 and 4 of the Review. The comment at paragraph 4.c. reflects the updated version of Defence Force Instruction (DFI) 18.6, Chapter 6, that is enclosed for your reference. The new Chapter of Defence Health Rule 39 Part 3 mentioned at paragraph 4.f. is yet to be released.

Based on the findings of the review, and considering the changes already implemented following your complaint, no further recommendations were made to change or develop new practices.

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 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

Yours sincerely

GA Motley

Brigadier

Chief of Staff HQNZDF

Enclosure:

1. DFI 18.6, Chapter 6