



Internal Affairs Te Tari Taiwhenua

30 June 2025

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Tēnā koe Wendy

Your Official Information Act 1982 request OIA2425-1224

I am responding to your email of 13 June 2025 to the Department of Internal Affairs (the Department) requesting information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), attached as **Appendix A**.

Transfer of your request

Upon further analysis of your request, I have determined that the following questions of your request should be answered by the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) and the Ministry of Transport respectively:

Transferred to the GCSB:

6. *What is the plan for the GCSB and NZDF dedicated government data centre (mentioned above)? For example, will the new data centre store all New Zealand Government data or only a small portion (please explain roughly the percentage)? When will this new data centre be operational? Who will own the data centre? Will all data currently located offshore be removed from the overseas data centre and moved back to the new dedicated government data centre?*

Transferred to the Ministry of Transport, as the responsible agency for the Submarine Cables and Pipelines Protection Act 1996:

14. *Has a risk assessment been undertaken of disruptions to submarine cables (e.g. if an earthquake severs the undersea cables that connect New Zealand and Australia)? If yes, by whom and when?*
15. *Does New Zealand have all the necessary skills and resources to repair a damaged cable if 10km of cable needs to be replaced between New Zealand and Australia without help from another country? If no, do New Zealand and Australia together have the necessary skills and resources to replace 10km cables, without any external help?*
16. *This article notes, 'Any damage could take months to repair.' If all the skills and resources are available in New Zealand and Australia, what is the range if 10km of cable needs to be replaced (e.g. 1–3 months or 1–12 months)?*
17. *What is the plan B if the cables are disrupted? How would New Zealand transmit key data to the world and vice versa? Given that the volume of data is likely to be restricted during a disruption, has work been done to select what data should take precedence (e.g. financial data)?*
18. *What protections and/or agreements are planned/in place to secure and protect our existing cables (e.g. underwater cameras, drones etc)? Who is responsible for such plans for international submarine cables?*

19. There is a number of proposed cables that are expected to be in operation in 2026, 2027 and 2028 (e.g. the SX Tasman Express, see article). Can you please list each of the existing and proposed undersea cables between Australia and New Zealand and advise who owns them? We want to understand whether New Zealand has control over the cables. Are any of the proposed cables being built or planned to be built between Australia and New Zealand owned by the New Zealand Government or in collaboration with the New Zealand Government? If yes, are they on time and within budget? Further, please indicate if the resulting capacity will include a degree of redundancy and if yes, how is that redundancy being calculated?

Partially transferred to the GCSB and the Ministry of Transport:

20. Work is clearly underway to make New Zealand less dependent and more resilient, but we are keen to clarify the extent we are currently vulnerable and what success might look like in the next few years. Can you provide any documents that set out New Zealand's strategy on any of the above topics?

The Department does not hold any information about the GCSB/New Zealand Defence Force dedicated data centre or information about submarine cables. Additionally, the Department does not hold any information about the relevant strategies for these work programmes.

Accordingly, I am partially transferring the responsibility for responding to this request to GCSB and the Ministry of Transport under section 14(b)(ii) of the Act. This section of the Act enables transfer when the information to which the request relates is more closely connected with the functions of another department or interdepartmental venture or Minister of the Crown or organisation, or of a local authority.

GCSB and the Ministry of Transport will respond to your request directly. Under section 14 of the Act, as this transfer has been made within ten working days of your request being made, these agencies can reset the timeline for response to your request.

You will receive a response from the Department to the remainder of your request by 14 July 2025.

Nāku noa, nā



Jeremy Cauchi
Director, Ministerial and Monitoring

Appendix A: Your OIA request

A: New Zealand Government data located in data centres in New Zealand

1. *Is all New Zealand Government data stored in New Zealand? What percentage of data is stored here? What percentage of agencies only store their data here.*
2. *Is the New Zealand Government storing data in Microsoft's first hyperscale data centre in New Zealand? If yes, roughly what percentage? If no, are there any plans to do so?*
3. *Is the New Zealand Government planning to store data at Amazon's new data centre in Auckland, New Zealand? If yes, roughly what percentage?*
4. *Is the New Zealand Government storing data with the New Zealand company Catalyst Cloud? Note that their website (see [here](#)) states that they are an 'approved cloud provider to the New Zealand Government'. If yes, roughly what percentage of data? If no, are there any plans to do so?*
5. *Can you provide a list of approved cloud providers to the New Zealand Government?*
6. *What is the plan for the GCSB and NZDF dedicated government data centre (mentioned above)? For example, will the new data centre store all New Zealand Government data or only a small portion (please explain roughly the percentage)? When will this new data centre be operational? Who will own the data centre? Will all data currently located offshore be removed from the overseas data centre and moved back to the new dedicated government data centre?*
7. *Are there plans to build any further dedicated government data centres in New Zealand (in addition to the one mentioned above)? And if yes, given the risk of a volcanic eruption in Auckland, have any alternative locations been discussed?*

B: New Zealand Government data stored in data centres owned by overseas companies, either in New Zealand or overseas - These risks could take many forms, such as disrupted access due to earthquakes, cyber attacks, blackmail, or attacks by unwelcome actors.

8. *Do any offshore data centres currently store New Zealand Government data? Please explain where the data centres are located and what company owns the data centre/s. NB: We understand that two Australian data centres, owned by Microsoft and Amazon respectively, did store New Zealand Government data.*
9. *Is the New Zealand Government data stored offshore 'confined' to Australian data centres? NB: We understand some global companies move data from one country to another country, depending on fluctuations in costs and volumes.*
10. *Is the data solely retrievable/accessible by the New Zealand Government, or does the owner of the offshore data centre (such as Microsoft and Amazon) have some ability to access the data? If yes, under what circumstances?*
11. *Are the Microsoft- and Amazon-owned data centres subject to overseas laws generally, such as the US CLOUD Act, which could mean US-owned cloud providers can be forced to hand over data to the US authorities – see [here](#)? What laws exist in New Zealand to prevent cloud providers being forced to hand over data to other countries?*

12. *Can you confirm that there is a back-up system in place in case the overseas-owned data centre is attacked/compromised? Are there plans in place if the New Zealand Government is unable to access the data that is stored offshore? Please explain the system and plans.*
13. *Has the New Zealand Government considered creating offshore backups in the form of a 'Data Embassy' in another country? The Estonian government has established a data embassy in Luxemburg which is fully under Estonian control and has the same rights as a physical embassy (see here).*

C: Data disruptions due to damage to our international submarine cables - These risks could take many forms, such as cables being damaged due to earthquakes, cyber attacks, blackmail, or attacks by unwelcome actors (e.g. what NATO calls 'seabed warfare').

14. *Has a risk assessment been undertaken of disruptions to submarine cables (e.g. if an earthquake severs the undersea cables that connect New Zealand and Australia)? If yes, by whom and when?*
15. *Does New Zealand have all the necessary skills and resources to repair a damaged cable if 10km of cable needs to be replaced between New Zealand and Australia without help from another country? If no, do New Zealand and Australia together have the necessary skills and resources to replace 10km cables, without any external help?*
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D: Strategy

20. *Work is clearly underway to make New Zealand less dependent and more resilient, but we are keen to clarify the extent we are currently vulnerable and what success might look like in the next few years. Can you provide any documents that set out New Zealand's strategy on any of the above topics?*