

28 May 2026

[REDACTED]

RNZ

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

### Official Information request and response

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act ("OIA") dated 21<sup>st</sup> May 2026. We note your request was addressed to a "Ministry" - for clarity, Te Ara Ahunga Ora is the Retirement Commission, an Autonomous Crown Entity established under the New Zealand Superannuation and Retirement Income Act 2001.

You have requested:

- *What Artificial Intelligence is your Ministry considering implementing in the next year?*
- *What aspects or parts of the business will it be implemented? ie how will the AI be used*
- *Will it's implementation reduce the workload or staff numbers?*
- *What safety and security protocols has it had to pass to be considered acceptable for implementation?*

### Our response:

#### Question 1 - AI the Commission is considering implementing in the next year

Te Ara Ahunga Ora has been an early and proactive adopter of AI within a governed environment. In June 2023, the Leadership Team approved an Artificial Intelligence Policy, and in late 2024 the Commission deployed Microsoft 365 Copilot across the organisation. A copy of our AI Policy is attached.

In addition, the Commission has approved limited, controlled access to a small number of specialist AI tools for specific subject-matter use cases (for example, creative and design-related work). These are restricted to named subject matter experts and are also subject to the Commission's AI Policy, approval processes, and ongoing review.

The Commission does not currently have a formal roadmap or plans to implement any specific new AI tools in the next year. We continue to evaluate opportunities as they arise, within our existing governed Microsoft 365 environment and in alignment with the Public Service AI Framework and OECD AI Principles adopted by Cabinet.

## Question 2 - How AI is used across the organisation

Microsoft 365 Copilot is available to all staff and is embedded within the tools they use daily. Common use cases include:

- Drafting and editing documents and communications
- Summarising meetings and email threads
- Synthesising information across files and data sources
- Data interpretation and analysis
- Supporting content creation and ideation

## Question 3 - Will AI reduce workload or staff numbers?

No. The Commission's AI Policy explicitly states that AI is valued *"as an assistant to work, not a replacement"*. Where the Commission has or will implement AI, it is purely as a tool to assist and augment how staff work. There are no plans, and there have been no decisions, to use AI as a means to reduce staff numbers.

## Question 4 - Safety and security protocols

The Commission operates a Microsoft 365 E5 environment, which provides enterprise-grade security and compliance controls. AI tools deployed within this environment are subject to the following protocols and safeguards:

- **AI Policy:** Approved by the Leadership Team in June 2023 and maintained as a living document. It governs the evaluation, approval, use, and monitoring of all AI tools across the organisation. A copy is attached.
- **Approval process:** Any AI tool outside of existing approved productivity tools must undergo an assessment and be approved by the Business Lead, the relevant Director, and the Chief Operating Officer.
- **Data protection:** Microsoft Purview Data Loss Prevention (DLP) policies, sensitivity labelling, and retention labelling are deployed across SharePoint, OneDrive, and Outlook to protect information.
- **Privacy:** Privacy considerations are embedded in the business case process for any new tool, with dedicated sections covering data privacy, security, and risk. The Commission Privacy Officer provides support and input.
- **Alignment with government frameworks:** The Commission's approach is aligned with the Public Service AI Framework, the Responsible AI Guidance for the Public Service issued by the GCDO, and New Zealand's adoption of the OECD AI Principles as agreed by Cabinet in June 2024.
- **Independent assurance:** The Commission undergoes periodic external security assessments to ensure its security posture remains appropriate.

You have the right to refer this response to the Ombudsman if you are dissatisfied with it. More information on how to do this is [here](#). Te Ara Ahunga Ora proactively releases information in accordance with the Government's commitment to the Open Government Partnership National



Action Plan. This includes publishing responses to requests for information under the OIA. Please note that this response (with your name removed) will be published on the Te Ara Ahunga Ora website shortly and will remain on our website for 12 months.

Thank you for your interest in our work.

Yours sincerely



David Boyle

**RETIREMENT COMMISSIONER / MANA AHUNGARUA**

