

HON JUDITH COLLINS KC, MINISTER OF DEFENCE

AUKUS PILLAR II: DEVELOPMENTS AND PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

September 2025

This publication provides an update to Ministers on recent AUKUS Pillar II discussions and recommended next steps to inform advice on potential New Zealand participation.

The pack comprises the following document:

- the July 2025 Joint Briefing *AUKUS Pillar II: Developments and Proposed Next Steps*.

This pack has been released on the Ministry of Defence website, available at: www.defence.govt.nz/publications/.

It has been necessary to withhold certain information in accordance with the following provisions of the Official Information Act 1982. Where information is withheld, the relevant sections of the Act are indicated in the body of the document. Information is withheld where making it available would be likely to prejudice:

- the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand [section 6(a)]
- the entrusting of information to the Government of New Zealand on a basis of confidence by the government of any other country [section 6(b)(i)].

Information is also withheld in order to:

- maintain the privacy of natural persons [section 9(2)(a)]
- maintain the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials [section 9(2)(f)(iv)]
- enable a Minister of the Crown or any department to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations [section 9(2)(j)].

Where information is withheld under section 9(2) of the Act it is not considered that the public interest outweighs the need to protect it.

18 July 2025

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Minister of Defence

For approval by 28 July 2025
For approval by 28 July 2025

AUKUS Pillar II: Developments and Proposed Next Steps

BRIEFING Decision Submission

PURPOSE To update Ministers on recent AUKUS Pillar II discussions and recommend next steps to inform advice on potential New Zealand participation.

Recommended referrals

Prime Minister	For information by	4 August 2025
Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs	For information by	4 August 2025
Associate Minister of Defence	For information by	4 August 2025

Contact details

NAME	ROLE	AGENCY	WORK PHONE
Charlotte Beaglehole	Divisional Manager, International Security & Disarmament Division	Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade	s9(2)(a)
Bronwyn Evans-Kent	Director, Defence Policy	Ministry of Defence	

Minister's Office to complete

<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Noted	<input type="checkbox"/> Referred
<input type="checkbox"/> Needs amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Declined	<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn
<input type="checkbox"/> Overtaken by events	<input type="checkbox"/> See Minister's notes	

Comments

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Key points

- Engagement with AUKUS partners [REDACTED] s6(a) on New Zealand's potential participation in AUKUS Pillar II has continued. [REDACTED] s6(b)(i)
[REDACTED] s6(a)
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
 - Officials are continuing engagement to narrow down potential Pillar II project concepts in [REDACTED] s6(a), s9(2)(f)(iv)
 - [REDACTED] s6(a)
- Ministers will be updated on major developments.
- [REDACTED] s6(a)
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Taha Macpherson
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Richard Schmidt
for Secretary of Defence

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Recommendations

It is recommended that you:

- | | | |
|---|---|-----------------|
| 1 | Note that officials continue to engage with AUKUS partners on AUKUS Pillar II, to inform advice to Cabinet on potential New Zealand participation; | Yes / No |
| 2 | Note that officials are engaging partners on the development of Pillar II project areas s6(a), s9(2)(f)(iv)

 | Yes / No |
| 3 | <div style="background-color: black; color: white; padding: 10px 20px;">s6(a)</div> | Yes / No |
| 4 | | Yes / No |
| 5 | | Yes / No |
| 6 | Refer a copy of this submission to the Prime Minister, Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Associate Minister of Defence. | Yes / No |

Rt Hon Winston Peters
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Date: / /

Hon Judith Collins KC
Minister of Defence

Date: / /

Released by the Minister of Defence

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s6(a)

Where to from here?

7. s6(a)

8.

9. New Zealand officials have been explicit s6(a)
that a decision to participate in Pillar II requires Cabinet approval, and that our engagements
will feed into a policy process to develop detailed options for Cabinet consideration. s6(a)

10. s6(a)

s6(a)

11. s6(a)

12.

13.

Released by the Minister of Defence

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s6(a)

14. s6(a)

15.

s6(a)

16. s6(a)

17.

18.

19. s6(a)

s6(a) New Zealand officials also remain engaged with counterparts in other prospective Pillar II countries.

s6(a)

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	s6(a)
20.	s6(a)
21.	
22.	
23.	
24.	

Resourcing

25. Any participation in AUKUS Pillar II would require resourcing. s6(a), s9(2)(f)(iv)
s6(a) s6(a) no
funding was included for AUKUS Pillar II, as no decision had yet been taken on participation.
s6(a), s9(2)(f)(iv)

26. As part of officials' ongoing analysis of potential Pillar II project options, officials would provide further advice to Ministers on the scope of potential resourcing requirements.