

9315 (2026)

What external legal costs, if any, were incurred by any department or entity for which the Minister is responsible in each financial year since 2020/21, broken down by department or entity and by the nature of the legal work (litigation, commercial advice, employment matters, Treaty matters, or other)?

New Zealand Defence Force Legal Services has incurred the following external legal costs over each financial year since 2020/21:

F/Y	Total Cost
2020/21	\$955,847
2021/22	\$1,439,490
2022/23	\$1,032,585
2023/24	\$1,106,956
2024/25	\$2,450,596
2025/26 (as at 23 March 2026)	\$940,794

The Ministry of Defence has no dedicated fulltime in-house legal advice, so engages external legal advisors as required. The Ministry has an established practice of engaging the services of external consultants, legal advisers and contractors where the Ministry does not possess the people or skills necessary for these activities, nor could it support fulltime employment of skilled staff to perform these specialised functions.

This includes probity consultants to provide oversight and advice on probity matters during the formal procurement phase for delivering major defence capability projects. This might be provided by a specialist probity consultant or by the project's external legal advisor.

Across this period, legal support has also been engaged to support the Inquiry into Operation Burham and the Ministry's work to establish the Office of the Inspector-General of Defence. Ministry of Defence Crown costs for the delivery of major defence capability projects:

Entity	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Bell Gully	\$193,777	\$4,102	\$24,722	\$59,674	\$105,196	\$115,376
PWC	\$8,220				\$3,333	
Russell McVeagh	\$133,077	\$78,909	\$63,756	\$227,322	\$13,264	\$15,489
Sykes Legal & Consulting	\$168,797	\$212,867	\$146,579	\$136,266	\$57,453	\$57,294

Ministry of Defence departmental costs:

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Andrew Scott-Howman			\$37,395			
Bell Gully	\$200	\$200				\$350
Buddle Findlay	\$11,043			\$80,526	\$15,390	
Crown Law Office	\$24,973		\$9,529	\$1,026	\$15,779	\$8,964
Dyhrberg Drayton Employment Law	\$25,079	\$17,703	\$84,401	\$5,000		
MBH Administration Ltd T/A Mahony Horner			\$8,000			
McHale Group Ltd		\$1,842	\$14,312			
MinterEllisonRuddWatts Ltd	\$10,000					
People With Purpose Limited	\$8,190					
PWC	\$2,950					
Russell McVeagh		\$12,023				\$1,602
Steph Dyhrberg Barrister				\$38,431	\$1,875	\$6,090
Sykes Legal & Consulting	\$107,438	\$77,953	\$112,599	\$103,591	\$101,687	\$49,481