



2026 - 2030

STRATEGIC INTENTIONS **KORONGA RAUTAKI**

FOR THE PERIOD
ENDING
30 JUNE
2030

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The Strategic Intentions covers the period FY 2026/27 to FY 2029/30.

Headquarters New Zealand
Defence Force
34 Bowen Street
Wellington 6011

Phone: (04) 496 0999
nzdf.mil.nz

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FOREWORD – MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MINISTER FOR VETERANS

KUPU WHAKATAKI NĀ TE MINITA WAWAONGA ME TE MINITA MŌ NGĀ IKA-Ā-WHIRO

Every day, the people of the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) serve our country with courage, professionalism, and an unwavering sense of duty.

I have seen first-hand the pride they take in their work and the responsibility they carry on behalf of all New Zealanders. It is a privilege to serve as Minister of Defence and to support the men and women who protect New Zealand and its interests.

New Zealand has entered a period where our security can no longer be assumed. The strategic environment is becoming ever more competitive, more volatile, and more contested. States in our region are expanding their military capabilities, coercive activity is increasing, and the international rules based system – on which New Zealand's security and economic prosperity depend – is under sustained pressure. These realities demand a Defence Force that is ready, resilient, and focused on defending New Zealand's interests.

As Minister, I am clear about the urgency of this moment. New Zealand cannot afford a Defence Force that is under prepared or under resourced. We must maintain credible capabilities, strengthen our partnership with Australia, and ensure an ability to act decisively when required.

The Government has set a strong strategic direction through the Strategic Defence Policy and the Defence Capability Plan 2025 (DCP25). The DCP25 is a significant change in the level of investment in our defence, focusing on air mobility, maritime domain awareness, land combat systems, digital modernisation, and logistics resilience. These investments will ensure the NZDF can operate credibly alongside partners and protect New Zealand's interests independently when necessary.

The NZDF is adapting to ensure it is better prepared, more resilient, and able to operate at the level today's environment demands. My priority is simple: to ensure New Zealand has a Defence Force that can defend the country and secure its interests, today and into the future.

As Minister for Veterans, I also recognise that the strength of our Defence Force rests on the people who serve, and on the ongoing obligation we have to support those whose service poses significant risk of harm when their service ends. The strategic environment we are facing is likely to place increasing demands on our personnel, with more frequent and more complex deployments. That makes it even more important that New Zealand delivers on its commitment to those who serve, both during and after their time in uniform.



Veterans' Affairs plays a vital role in meeting that responsibility. Significant progress has been made in reducing backlogs and improving timeliness of decisions, and that momentum will continue. Veterans' Affairs is strengthening its capability, upgrading its systems, and working more closely with the NZDF to ensure veterans receive the support they are entitled to when they need it.

I thank all those who serve, and those who have served, New Zealand through the NZDF. Their commitment underpins our security and our values. I am committed to ensuring that our Defence Force is strong and capable and that when service leaves lasting impacts, New Zealand stands alongside its veterans with tangible support, not just words.

Statement of Responsibility

I am satisfied that the information on strategic intentions prepared by the New Zealand Defence Force is consistent with the policies and performance expectations of the Government.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. Penk', written over a white background.

Hon Chris Penk
Minister of Defence
Minister for Veterans

INTRODUCTION – CHIEF OF DEFENCE FORCE

KUPU TĪMATANGA – TUMU WHAKARAE O TE OPE KĀTUA

New Zealand now faces its most complex and contested strategic environment in decades. Strategic competition in the Indo Pacific is intensifying, and military modernisation in the region is accelerating.

The international rules based system, long central to our security and prosperity, is under strain, while climate change is amplifying instability across the Pacific and increasing demand for humanitarian and disaster response. Cyber threats, coercive actions at sea, and vulnerabilities in global supply chains further compress warning time and increase the likelihood of concurrent crises. Meeting these challenges requires credible capabilities, strong partnerships, and the ability to project force and presence sustainably, reliably, and at pace.

The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) is uniquely positioned to respond to these challenges. We deliver military effects across the spectrum of operations – from protecting the Exclusive Economic Zone, to contributing to regional stability and partnering with allies. Our military effects are underpinned by disciplined, integrated, combat ready armed forces at short notice. Sustaining this readiness requires a skilled workforce, modern capabilities, and an organisational approach supported by a strong warfighting ethos. This includes an emphasis on mission command, disciplined initiative, and deep professional mastery, ensuring that activity is always oriented toward delivering meaningful combat power.

In line with the Strategic Defence Policy, the NZDF is sharpening its operational focus to ensure it can respond effectively in a more demanding environment, strengthening readiness, modernising capabilities, and equipping people to operate confidently in combat. This direction is supported by the DCP, which sets out a regeneration programme investing in maritime, land, air, cyber and information capabilities, underpinned by modern infrastructure and workforce. These investments will deliver a significant uplift in the NZDF's ability to project force, sustain operations, independently, or with partners – particularly Australia, our Pacific and other close regional counterparts. This must be accompanied by candid engagement with Government on the choices, risks, and consequences involved, ensuring that capability investments translate into operationally credible options.



The work ahead is demanding, but essential. By reinforcing readiness, regenerating capability, and embedding a warfighting ethos across the force, the NZDF will remain a trusted regional and international partner – disciplined, integrated, and ready to protect New Zealand's interests in an increasingly contested world.

Statement of Responsibility

In signing this information, I acknowledge that I am responsible for the information on strategic intentions for the New Zealand Defence Force, including Veterans' Affairs. This information has been prepared in accordance with sections 38 and 40 of the Public Finance Act 1989.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Tony Davies'.

Tony Davies
Air Marshal
Chief of Defence Force

NZDF STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

VISION	Ready to fight tonight, tomorrow and together
PURPOSE	We defend New Zealand and protect its interests
MILITARY SERVICES	Royal New Zealand Navy New Zealand Army Royal New Zealand Air Force
DEFENCE POLICY OBJECTIVES	Protect and promote the security of New Zealand and the immediate region. Enhance the ANZUS alliance with Australia and New Zealand's most important security partnerships. Contribute to achieving New Zealand's global interests.
NZDF STRATEGIC OUTCOMES	Stronger combat capabilities. A warfighting ethos. Enhanced strategic command and control to apply military power. A resilient and scalable force. Deepened relationships with key partners.
REQUIRED STATE	The NZDF is prepared for conflict in the near term.

NZDF OUTPUTS	<p>Prepared (Navy, Army, Air Force) Protect Project Inform Support Veterans</p>
CORE EFFECTS	<p>Project force. Sustain combat operations concurrently. Deter through denial of opportunity. Maintain persistent situational awareness in New Zealand's Exclusive Economic Zone, the South Pacific and Southern Ocean. Contribute to national defence and help deliver whole-of-government security objectives.</p>
VALUES	<p>Courage Tū Kaha Commitment Tū Tika Comradeship Tū Tira Integrity Tū Māia</p>
LEGISLATION	<p>Defence Act 1990 Veterans' Support Act 2014</p>
NZDF PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK	<p>Strategic Performance Output Performance Organisational Health</p>



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**ABOUT THE
NEW ZEALAND
DEFENCE FORCE**

**E PĀ ANA TE
OPE KĀTUA O
AOTEAROA**

THE ROLE OF THE NZDF

The NZDF is a combat-capable military force; trained, equipped and ready to respond 24/7. Its core task is to protect the sovereign territory of New Zealand, including its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and to act at the Government's direction to meet likely contingencies in New Zealand's strategic areas of interest. Its equipment and expertise support people and communities in need at home, across the region, and around the world. The work to generate and maintain combat readiness is the core of what the NZDF does every day. It is expected to act early and deliberately to shape the security environment with a credible and deployable force that can operate across the spectrum of operations with a warfighting focus.

The NZDF contributes to a diverse range of defence and security activities, both domestically and overseas. It is the only agency of state that maintains disciplined, combat-ready forces available at short notice and which operates large-scale and integrated fleets of military platforms and capabilities. Having up-to-date maritime, land, air, information and space capabilities, and associated technology, along with disciplined and highly trained people, ensures the NZDF is ready for combat and able to quickly respond to military crises as they unfold.

The NZDF comprises three military Services – the Royal New Zealand Navy, the New Zealand Army and the Royal New Zealand Air Force – which are supported by civilian employees, reservists and contractors. The NZDF has a wide range of specialised military capabilities, including ships, aircraft, vehicles and forces to deliver military outputs, support operations and undertake activities. Camps and bases are situated around New Zealand, as well as locations overseas to support leadership planning, training, exercises, and conducting operations, along with storing and maintaining capabilities and supplies.

The NZDF provides the Government with a broad range of capabilities that support an all of Government approach to advancing New Zealand's national and international interests. The NZDF's foremost priority is the generation and maintenance of credible and effective military capabilities for expeditionary operations, regional stability missions, and response to regional crises. In parallel, the NZDF plays a critical role in supporting New Zealand's resilience and sovereignty by working closely with government agencies to protect resources, enforce control of protected areas, enable freedom of movement, and through sustained presence and engagement in support of diplomatic objectives. The NZDF also provides vital support to the New Zealand community by assisting with civil defence and emergency management, by standing ready to assist civil authorities during crises, and through the provision of life saving support, within New Zealand, the Pacific, the Southern Ocean, and further afield. Collectively, these contributions strengthen New Zealand's efforts, as a credible and reliable security partner, to uphold the international rules-based system.

Legislation

The NZDF is a government department as defined by Section 2 of the Public Finance Act 1989, while the functions of the NZDF are mandated by the Defence Act 1990 and the Veterans' Support Act 2014. The NZDF provides the Government with defence outputs in conjunction with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) in accordance with these acts. The Minister of Defence has power of control of the NZDF, which is exercised through the Chief of Defence Force (CDF) as the principal military advisor, and is responsible for the appropriations in Vote Defence Force. The CDF is responsible for the conduct of military operations and, under their command, the NZDF provides the Government with options to exert influence and respond to defence and security events. This depends on maintaining credible military capabilities at readiness levels consistent with the Government's direction.

The Defence Act 1990 defines the NZDF's purpose, aligning the nation's military with enduring values and interests. It provides that the Armed Forces can be raised and maintained for the following purposes:

- Defending New Zealand and any other area for which New Zealand is responsible
- Protecting national interests in New Zealand or elsewhere
- Contributing forces under collective security treaties, agreements, or arrangements
- Contributing forces to the United Nations (UN), for its purposes, or other organisations or states in accordance with the UN charter's principles
- Assisting the Government in New Zealand or elsewhere during emergencies
- Providing public services.

The Minister for Veterans is responsible for the Veterans' Affairs (VA) appropriations within Vote Defence Force. VA is a unit of the NZDF which provides services and support to those whose service has posed significant risk of harm and, in some cases, members of their family or whānau, as outlined in the Veterans' Support Act 2014. The Veterans' Support Act defines what support can be provided to those with qualifying service and their family and whānau. This responsibility does not cover everyone who has ever served, but rather a subgroup who meet the definition of "veteran" in the Act and who are thus eligible for entitlements under the legislation. The legislation emphasises rehabilitation and specifies the entitlements that veterans are eligible for if they are injured or become ill as a result of their service.

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

New Zealand is facing its most challenging and dangerous strategic environment for decades. Recent geopolitical developments demonstrate the increasing and compounding nature of threats to New Zealand's national security interests. These include Russia's continuing war with Ukraine and their disregard for international law, ongoing tensions in the Middle East, and growing strategic competition in the wider Indo-Pacific.

The existing international rules-based system is increasingly being challenged by those who seek to undermine international rules or norms or reshape global orders in ways contrary to New Zealand's values and interests. Intensifying strategic competition is increasing global and regional tensions and raising the prospect of military confrontation and conflict.

The Indo-Pacific is a primary geographical theatre for strategic competition, most visibly between China and the United States. China's assertive pursuit of its strategic objectives is the principal driver for strategic competition in the Indo-Pacific, and it continues to use all its tools of statecraft in ways that can challenge both international norms of behaviour and the security of other states. Of particular concern is the rapid and non-transparent growth of China's military capability.

States within the Indo-Pacific and globally are responding to these pressures by increasingly investing in their own military and security capabilities, deepening and broadening their bilateral and multinational security partnerships, and adopting sharper security postures. This includes our closest international security partners and other states that share security interests with New Zealand.

Rising competition and tensions in the wider Indo-Pacific are playing out in New Zealand's immediate region, which spans from Antarctica through to the South Pacific. While wider international engagement and interest in the Pacific can bring some benefits to the region, it also presents challenges for regional security, stability, and unity.

Climate change remains the primary security concern for Pacific Island countries. It is driving increasing and intensifying natural disasters, and over time could cause critical challenges for some Pacific countries both directly and by exacerbating other security issues.

Both climate change and growing strategic interest in the Pacific are layering on top of other regional security challenges, including vulnerability and exposure to natural hazards, transnational organised crime, illegal fishing, and maritime security threats. Civil disorder has also demonstrated the potential to create instability in the Pacific.

Strategic interest in the Southern Ocean and Antarctica is also growing. The Antarctic Treaty System continues to provide the framework for state activity, but it is increasingly coming under pressure. It is clear that the Antarctic region is not immune to the spill-over impacts of strategic competition elsewhere.

New Zealand's geographic isolation no longer shelters it from threats to the extent it once did. There are increasing threats to, and through, the country's extensive maritime area of interest. In addition to the risk of illegal activities, it faces the increasing prospect of hostile forces operating in the wider maritime domain in ways that are coercive and threatening. Cyber intrusions are an ever-present threat, and physical and virtual connections to the world are increasingly vulnerable.

DELIVERING MILITARY EFFECTS

The NZDF must be prepared to deliver military effects¹ to protect New Zealand, its interests, and meet the expectations of the Government, the New Zealand public, Australia and close partners, and uphold New Zealand's constitutional obligations².

As outlined in the *Strategic Defence Policy 25 (SDP25)*, the effects to be delivered are:

PROJECT force³ to deter adversaries, respond to crises in the region and defend the Realm countries.

MAINTAIN persistent situational awareness in New Zealand's EEZ, the South Pacific, the Southern Ocean and the Ross Dependency. A range of capabilities must be available to ensure that the NZDF has persistent awareness across these areas.

DETER through denial of opportunity for actors that seek to challenge the existing regional strategic balance and undermine shared security in the Pacific. The NZDF will work alongside Pacific and other international partners and as part of a whole-of-government approach, and should act to address existing and emerging regional security challenges.

SUSTAIN combat operations concurrently, such as sustaining land combat operations for at least 24 months, or multiple smaller concurrent operations.

CONTRIBUTE to national defence and help deliver whole-of-government security objectives, including assisting other agencies to detect and respond to transnational organised crime in the immediate region, including in Realm countries; responding to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, narcotics and people smuggling; undertaking search and rescue; and providing other domestic support, including in response to disaster relief, counter-terrorism, and explosives disposal.

NEW ZEALAND'S DEFENCE SYSTEM

Defence is a collective for the NZDF and the MoD as the main agencies focused specifically on the defence of New Zealand. The Defence Act 1990 establishes a separation between the departments while requiring a close working relationships to achieve Government direction. The CDF is the Government's principal military adviser, while the Secretary of Defence is the chief executive of the MoD and the Government's principal civilian adviser on defence matters. Together, the two agencies provide Ministers with coordinated military and civilian perspectives on defence policy, operations, activities and investments to include capability, international engagement, deployments and other defence issues.

The separation of roles supports contestability and assurance across the defence system. The MoD provides long-range assessments and advice on New Zealand's defence interests that inform the Government's defence policy settings – working closely with the NZDF to interpret, align and apply the settings. The two agencies also work closely together on capability investments, with the MoD purchasing major equipment which becomes a capability when it is used by the NZDF.

The NZDF and the MoD have joint governance boards, including the Strategy Governance Board which governs the delivery and alignment of activities to successfully achieve the strategic outcomes set by Government. The Board is co-chaired by the Secretary of Defence and CDF and considers matters within their shared and complementary accountabilities.

Defence is also an integral part of New Zealand's broader national security system. The CDF and the Secretary of Defence are members of the National Security Board (strategic governance) and participate in Strategic Crisis Response through the Officials' Committee for Domestic and External Security Coordination. Through these arrangements, Defence contributes leadership, coordination and support to all of government responses to national security issues.

Global contribution

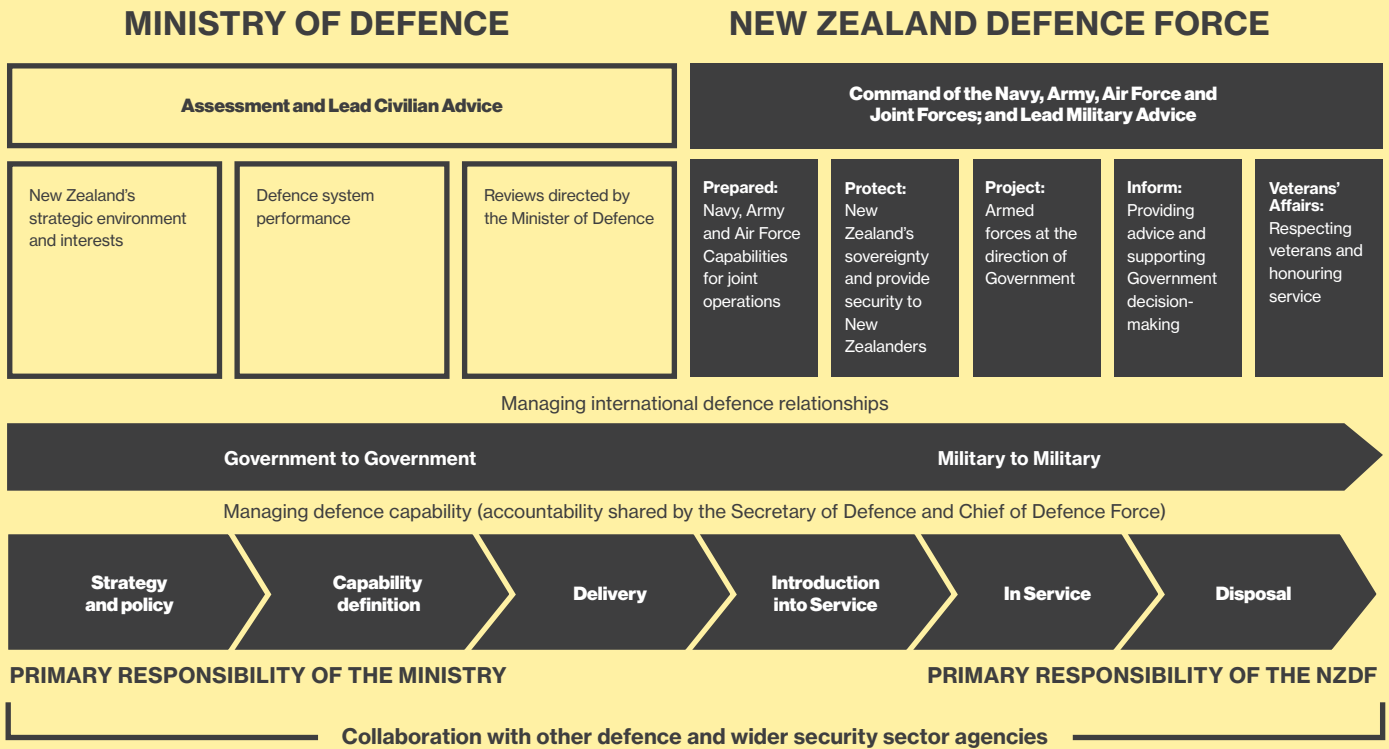
New Zealand has a proud history of contributing to international conflict resolution, strengthening the international rules-based system and promoting New Zealand's interests through maintaining a global presence. It is a credible coalition partner committed to peace and security. This is achieved through the NZDF's participation in operations and activities around the world alongside international partners. The NZDF contributes to New Zealand's system of strong international relationships by upholding connections with international military and diplomatic partners to ensure these partnerships are maintained. A network of Defence Attachés and Defence Advisers also provides a military presence in New Zealand's diplomatic missions.

The NZDF contributes to overseas military arrangements including engagement with the UN, Five Power Defence Arrangement, Five Eyes, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), and other coalition and multinational partnerships. New Zealand partners with other countries—such as its ally Australia as well as Pacific Island countries, Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, and NATO – promoting global peace and security. New Zealand must meet its constitutional responsibilities for the Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau as well as its Antarctic claim and Antarctic Treaty obligations.

1 An effect is a change in the operating environment caused by actions.

2 New Zealand has constitutional obligations towards the Realm countries (the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau) and the Ross Dependency.

3 The ability to project the NZDF, including its people and equipment, outside of New Zealand according to the needs of a military operation.



Partnerships with like-minded militaries increases the ability to work together and maintain a shared, common knowledge and understanding of the values and benefits of stability around the globe, reducing opportunities for actions in the region by hostile state and non-state actors that are contrary to New Zealand's interests. Defence works closely with other New Zealand agencies and international partners to support collective security approaches to shared challenges, including through maximising opportunities for enhanced interoperability and integration. The NZDF actively contributes to building partner capacity across a spectrum of military and non-military functions, including international diplomatic engagements to strengthen partnerships. New Zealand has a proven record as a trusted partner preventing and resolving conflict, including the support of UN initiatives in Asia, Africa, the Pacific, the Middle East, and Europe, some of which have involved long-lasting commitments.

The NZDF is a trusted strategic and operational partner, with Australia and the Pacific as the highest Defence engagement priorities. New Zealand's location and security interests, as well as historic, cultural, and people-to-people ties, make it a key regional partner. The *International Defence Engagement Strategy* focuses on understanding, gaining access, influencing, and supporting to enable key bilateral and regional engagement objectives, as well as the need to build and maintain relationships supporting broader Government. Defence has increased engagement with Australia through initiatives including collective training, combined operations, Service initiatives, and key leader engagements to enhance the relationship and interoperability.

The NZDF is a key part of New Zealand's broader national security system, and it makes a vital contribution to achieving the Government's security and foreign policy objectives. The NZDF is part of the External Sector, which comprises four agencies: the NZDF, the MoD, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the New Zealand Customs Service. These agencies manage most of New Zealand's official relationships with the rest of the world, protecting its security beyond the border, and contributing to collective security with friends, partners, and allies.

Relationships With New Zealand Government Departments and Agencies

While the principal role of the NZDF is the generation of military forces for a range of contingencies, the NZDF also makes substantial contributions to other government departments and agencies, non-government and voluntary organisations, industry and communities around New Zealand.

As part of the NZDF's outputs, it supports border and resource protection efforts, and assistance to civil authorities in emergency and non-emergency situations. Border protection efforts include maintaining maritime domain awareness and support to the New Zealand Customs Service through monitoring unusual activities and searching vessels of interest, as well as air surveillance capabilities where required. Assistance is provided to agencies such as the New Zealand Police and Fire and Emergency New Zealand when incidents exceed the capabilities of the local resources, such as search and rescue, wildfires, and explosive ordnance response and disposal. The NZDF provides training opportunities for and alongside such agencies to ensure a collaborative approach in unpredictable situations. It also contributes to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts, both domestically and within the wider region.

The NZDF contributes to the intelligence community, youth and social sectors, the education and training sector, the aviation, maritime and transport sectors, primary industry and conservation. This support to the wider New Zealand community includes a range of youth and young adult development programmes, short-term assistance for special or nationally significant events and the preservation of the nation's military heritage and culture.

The NZDF maintains strategic relationships with a range of industry partners to support its work, including the maintenance of ships, aircraft, and the NZDF estate. A *Defence Industry Strategy* was released in September 2025 as part of the DCP25 which sets out how Defence and the New Zealand industry will work together to deliver projected Defence investments. This will build a strong, resilient industry that delivers economic growth and helps grow export markets through investing with local companies in engineering and commercial services as well as in maintenance, repair and training support. Defence will continue to be a major contributor to New Zealand's economy, encourage innovative solutions for new challenges and reduce the reliance on overseas manufacturers and supply chains.

GOVERNMENT DIRECTION FOR DEFENCE

The Government provides direction to Defence in several forms, including policy statements, ministerial priorities, and other relevant Government priorities and strategies. New Zealand's national defence policy and strategic interests and objectives are developed through a cross-agency policy review process.

New Zealand's *National Security Strategy 2023–2028* promotes a focused, integrated and inclusive approach for working together both domestically and with a strong network of international partners. The three outcomes and priorities for the security sector are:

New Zealand is protected from threats.

Acting early to prevent national security threats and build New Zealand's resilience.

A resilient society, informed and engaged on national security threats.

Working together to foster collective understanding and approaches.

An effective national security system.

Leading an integrated approach.

The NZDF directly contributes to these outcomes and priorities through the prevention of national security threats, shaping the strategic environment and safeguarding New Zealand's key interests.

Other key government strategies which have a strong influence on NZDF activities include *Maritime Security Strategy 2024* and *New Zealand Space and Advanced Aviation Strategy 2024–2030*. These strategies involve multiple elements which the NZDF directly contribute to, including ensuring New Zealand is safeguarded and prepared for future challenges and advancements. Investments in military capabilities and resources are also directly influenced by these strategies, such as the re-establishment of RNZAF No. 62 Squadron as a dedicated space unit to advance New Zealand's contribution to space domain awareness.

Outlined in the Defence Act, Defence Assessments are conducted through the MoD under the direction of the Government to ensure Defence direction and policy settings remain appropriate for the current strategic environment. The most recent Defence Assessment was released in 2021.

Ministerial Expectations and Priorities

The Minister of Defence sets expectations and priorities annually for Defence as a whole, while the Minister for Veterans sets the priorities for VA. Although Defence priorities are set for both the NZDF and MoD, each department focusses on its own contribution to meeting these priorities.

The most recent priorities for the Minister of Defence are:

- Implement the Defence Capability Plan 2025 and deliver an industry strategy.⁴
- Increase operational tempo and maintain strong relationships with key partners.
- Exercise financial prudence.
- Ensure the NZDF workforce and legislative settings are fit for purpose.
- Contribute to public messaging around defence and national security.

The Minister for Veterans sets expectations and priorities which focus on veterans' health and wellbeing. These priorities are:

- Improving services to veterans through Veterans' Affairs.
- Ensuring better recognition for those who have served.

4 The Defence Industry Strategy was released in September 2025.

STRATEGIC DEFENCE POLICY⁵

NATIONAL SECURITY

Protecting New Zealand from threats and advancing our national interests through harnessing all tools of statecraft

OUR DEFENCE INTERESTS

A secure, sovereign, and resilient New Zealand

A stable, secure, and resilient region

OUR DEFENCE POLICY OBJECTIVES

DEFENCE WILL ACT EARLY AND DELIBERATELY IN PROTECTING

1

Protect and promote the security of New Zealand and the immediate region.

Safeguarding our sovereignty and territorial integrity, and promoting and protecting the security of our immediate region and sustaining regional conditions favourable to our security interests.

2

Enhance the ANZUS alliance with Australia and New Zealand's most important security partnerships.

Material contributions to our security partnerships, particularly to our alliance with Australia, to the wider Five Eyes partnership, and our bilateral and regional Pacific partnerships.

OUR DEFENCE STRATEGY

UNDERSTAND

Defence will develop and share enhanced awareness and understanding of key operational and strategic environments, including through close cooperation with domestic and international partners, and the innovative use of new technologies.

PARTNER

Defence will work closely with other New Zealand agencies and our international partners to support collective security approaches to shared challenges, including through maximising opportunities for enhanced interoperability, and integration.

BASED ON FOUNDATIONS OF

EQUIP AND SUPPORT THE FORCE

⁵ The Strategic Defence Policy was published within the DCP25 document.

Collective security through a strong network of partners

A strong and effective international rules-based order

PURSuing AND PROTECTING OUR DEFENCE INTERESTS

3

Contribute to achieving New Zealand's global interests.

Contribute to global security through ongoing defence engagement, operations, and activities.

ACT

Defence will act early and deliberately to promote and protect New Zealand's interests, and will maintain credible, combat-capable forces able to operate and respond to events across the spectrum of military operations, both independently, and alongside our international security partners.

REGENERATED, FIT-FOR-PURPOSE WORKFORCE



02

**STRATEGIC
DIRECTION**

**ARONGA
RAUTAKI**

STRATEGIC INTENTIONS

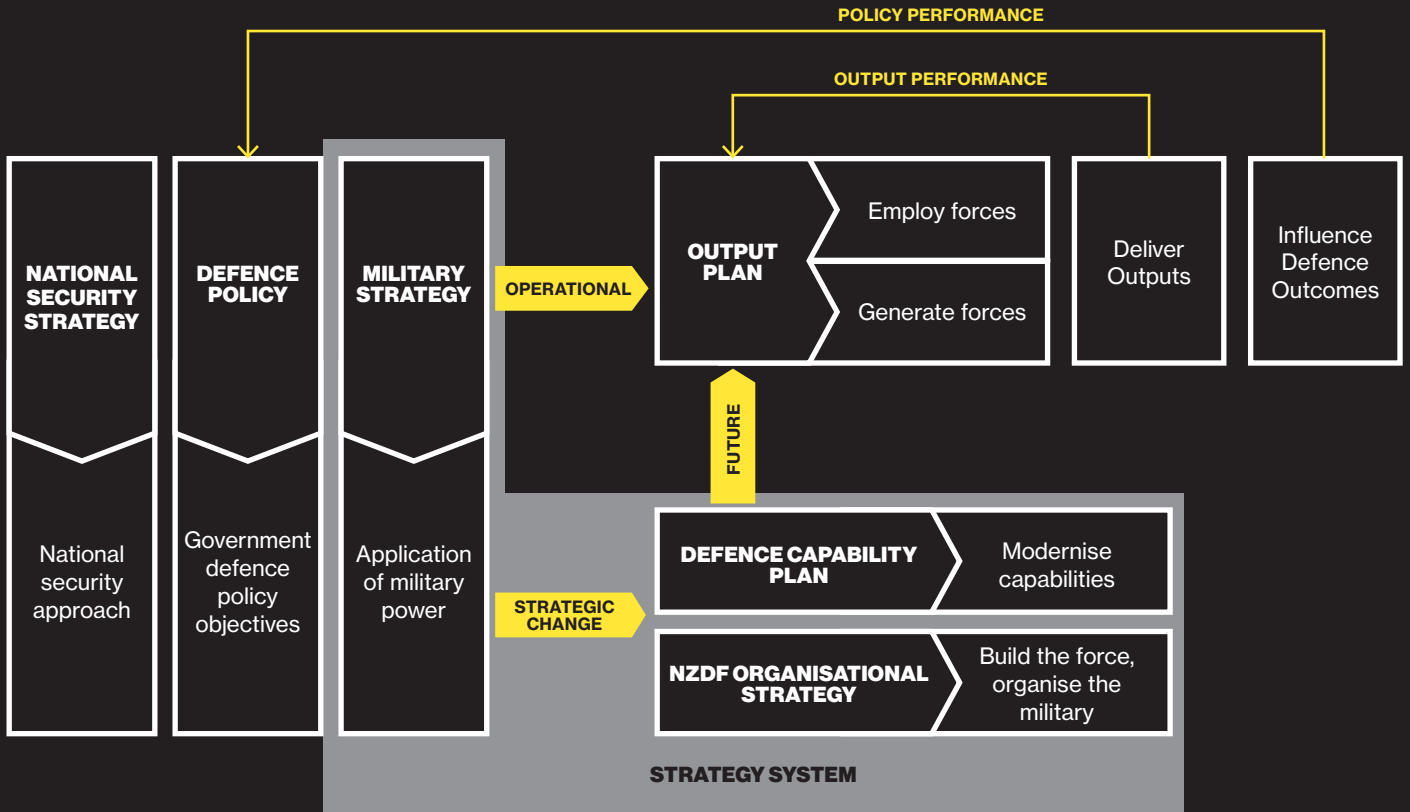
The NZDF protects New Zealand's defence interests in a deliberate and purposeful way, shaping itself to respond to the challenging security environment. Intensifying strategic competition is increasing global and regional tensions, raising the likelihood of military confrontation and conflict. As the geopolitical environment changes, the NZDF needs to be capable of responding to a more volatile and unstable operating environment. The NZDF is embedding a warfighting focus across every level of the Force, emphasising the need to defend New Zealand's security and be prepared for conflict.

The *Strategic Defence Policy 2025 (SDP25)* sets the direction for the NZDF to have a stronger combat and warfighting focus. The NZDF directly contributes to the policy objectives through the operations, tasks and actions undertaken every day to protect New Zealand and its interests. Through the DCP25, the Government has acknowledged the need for the NZDF to regenerate and build a stronger military force to support this new direction, ensuring the NZDF has the right people to perform tasks with the right capabilities so strategic objectives can be achieved. Internally, the NZDF Organisational Strategy addresses stabilisation of military fundamentals, the upgrades and modernisation of military capabilities, and the application of resources to generate forces and deliver military outputs with a systems perspective.

New Zealand requires a military force that can defend the country against external threats whilst protecting sovereign interests. The need for the NZDF to be prepared for conflict in the near term underpins the NZDF Organisational Strategy. This will be demonstrated through operational preparedness, readiness, and strengthened partnerships, along with increased recruitment, training, and involvement in overseas exercises and activities.



NZDF STRATEGY SYSTEM



The strategic direction of the NZDF is guided through a system of national security and defence policies, strategic approaches and delivery plans. The NZDF’s agenda for comprehensive long-term change is set through the Military Strategy, the *NZDF Organisational Strategy*, and the DCP25. These describe the ways and means of the NZDF’s strategic approach to deliver impacts for New Zealand.

The NZDF is prepared for conflict in the near term.

Military Strategy

The *Military Strategy* is the NZDF's high-level approach to using military power to achieve Defence policy objectives. It is the critical connection between Defence policy and operational planning. The Military Strategy is the capstone document for the NZDF's military plans and scenarios. It also guides Defence approaches for international engagement, industry engagement and capability investment.

The NZDF Organisational Strategy

The *NZDF Organisational Strategy* is the change agenda for building the force and organising the NZDF. It was refreshed in 2026 to realise Defence Policy and Military Strategy objectives in the context of the current geostrategic and internal environments.

Required State

The required state is the central idea of the organisational strategy: **The NZDF is prepared for conflict in the near term.** The required state emphasises heightened urgency driven by threats in the security environment. The NZDF must rapidly increase the readiness of its military capabilities and its ability to sustain operations from persistent competition to conflict.

Strategic Outcomes

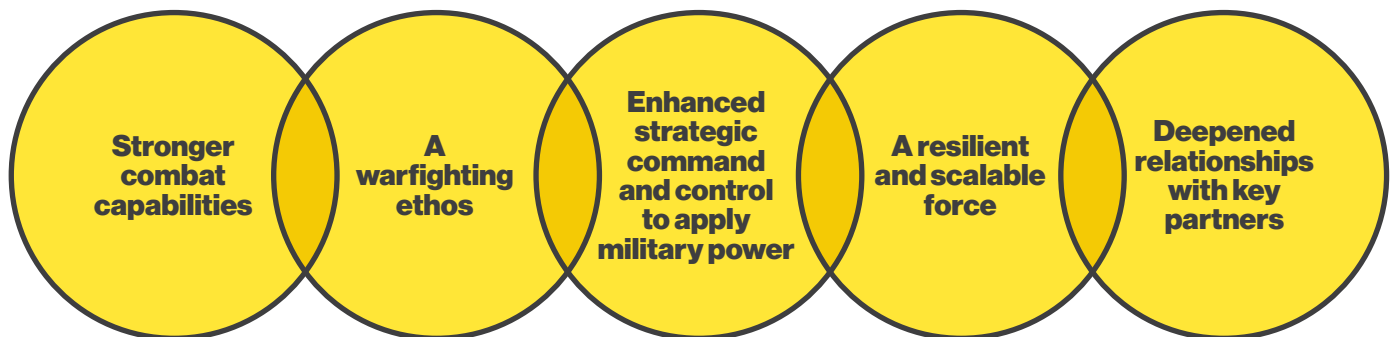
The five Strategic Outcomes with the NZDF Organisational Strategy are high-level results that are needed to meet the NZDF's vision and purpose and to achieve the required state. The outcomes are interrelated and mutually supporting. Each is divided into three sub-outcomes that describe the outcomes as more specific goals. The strategy's timeframe is to 2030 and looks out to 2040.

STRATEGIC OUTCOMES	DESCRIPTION
Stronger combat capabilities	The NZDF capability contribution to national security deters those who would act in ways adverse to New Zealand's interests.
A warfighting ethos	NZDF people, both uniformed and civilian, work and act in ways that are focussed on operations in a warfighting environment.
Enhanced strategic command and control to apply military power	The NZDF's strategic-level command and control system decisively and incisively applies influence, deterrence and lethal effects.
A resilient and scalable force	The NZDF can conduct operations and actions over extended periods and through protracted strategic and operational situations.
Deepened relationships with key partners	The NZDF is a valuable security partner and has close ties with nations and organisations aligned to securing national interests.

NZDF ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGY

VISION	Ready to fight tonight, tomorrow and together
PURPOSE	We defend New Zealand and protect its interests

STRATEGIC OUTCOMES



REQUIRED STATE	The NZDF is prepared for conflict in the near term
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VALUES	Courage Tū Kaha Commitment Tū Tika Comradeship Tū Tira Integrity Tū Māia
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Defence Capability Plan 2025

The DCP25 is the Government's plan for rebuilding NZDF capability over the next 15 years to prepare for an increasingly volatile world. It deliberately focuses on critical investments in the first four years from its release to ensure New Zealand and the NZDF can adapt to the changing world. It outlines investments in new capabilities for enhancing combat capability as well as replacing critical assets, equipment, and other support that NZDF personnel need to succeed. More details on these investments can be found in Section 3 – Organisational Structure of this Strategic Intentions document, and in the DCP25.

To support long-term planning, Defence must be able to anticipate future challenges and understand technological developments. To support this, the DCP will be reviewed every two years.

DELIVERING OUTPUTS

The NZDF Outputs are the funded activities and tasks, directed by the Government. The Navy, Army, and Air Force generate the NZDF's core military outputs through developed and sustained military capabilities. For example, naval combat, indirect fire support (artillery), and airborne maritime surveillance, supported by Headquarters New Zealand Defence Force as a military strategic headquarters, while Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand runs operations. The annual *NZDF Output Plan* provides the means of managing and reporting on performance to assure the Government that the NZDF is delivering outputs to the directed standard, including the readiness⁶ states of military capabilities.

The *NZDF Output Framework* was agreed and directed by Cabinet and published in the Estimates of Appropriation, Vote Defence Force for the delivery of NZDF Outputs and accountability for expenditure of public money. The *NZDF Output Framework* directs the output structure, performance measures and targets relating to the NZDF's performance. The NZDF's outputs classes are shown on the diagram on page 25.

The *NZDF Output Plan* details the delivery of military capability and other services to ensure the NZDF provides effective military contributions when required by the Government. It establishes the readiness for contingent military operations and other key capabilities involved in preparing and deploying joint forces for operations and other tasks. This document is refreshed every year to complement the Estimates of Appropriations and allows for any changes or updates to the NZDF's activity requirements.



6 Readiness is the ability of a force to be committed to operations.

NZDF OUTPUTS FRAMEWORK

DEFENCE POLICY OBJECTIVE

Defence will act early and deliberately in pursuing and protecting our defence interests, particularly in and for the Pacific by:

1. Promoting and protecting New Zealand defence interests in our region, particularly in the Pacific
2. Contributing globally to collective security efforts that protect New Zealand's interests and values
3. Responding to events in New Zealand, our region and globally where required



THE NZDF OUTPUTS FRAMEWORK

OUTPUTS

123

PREPARED

The generation of single Service force elements in preparation for Joint operations and other tasks. This includes combat, such that maritime, land (including special operations) and aerospace capabilities, can be deployed, sustained, recovered and regenerated at the scales of effort required to meet the Government's strategic objectives.

OUTPUT

6

INFORM

Advice is provided to support decision-making by the Government on defence policy matters, including the provision of intelligence analysis, military advice, statutory and legislative support, and reporting to the Minister of Defence. More widely, it also covers an advisory role with the MoD for other Cabinet Ministers and senior officials in the Officials' Committee for Domestic and External Security Coordination.

OUTPUT

4

PROTECT

Utilisation of the generation of military combat capability delivered to the Government through Outputs 1 – 3 to protect New Zealand's sovereignty and provide security and other services for New Zealanders. This encompasses the NZDF's support to border and resource protection efforts, assistance to civil authorities in emergency and non-emergency situations, support to the wider New Zealand community, and an international defence engagement programme.

OUTPUT

7

VETERANS

This provides policy, services, and payment support to veterans. While this output is part of Vote Defence Force, the appropriation for this is administered by the Minister for Veterans.

OUTPUT

5

PROJECT

The employment of military combat capability generated through Outputs 1 – 3 in conducting operations that contribute to New Zealand's security, stability, and interests, as directed by the Government. This encompasses military operations in support of regional security and the international rules-based system.

A review of the NZDF Outputs Framework will commence in 2026 to ensure ongoing alignment with current defence policy and modern operating domains.

ORGANISATIONAL STEWARDSHIP

NZDF Governance System

The NZDF Governance System has been refreshed to enable long-term stewardship and prioritisation of resources to achieve the NZDF Military Strategy and the Organisational Strategy. This system empowers and drives accountability throughout the NZDF, clarifying how it sets and pursues the NZDF's purpose and allows leaders to govern proactively.

The *Military Governance Board* provides purpose, direction, priority and strategic military leadership for the NZDF. It strengthens the NZDF's ability to implement defence policy and provides overall strategic intent for the organisation, focussing on strategy and risk over the medium to long term (2-15 years). The board sets the military strategy, guides the organisation through instructions to the Organisational Governance Board (OGB) to deliver strategy, and provides direction to elements of the Military Strategic Headquarters (for example, Strategic Commitments and Engagements, Defence Intelligence, Joint Forces, etc.)

The OGB provides unified leadership for the NZDF, aligning the force to deliver the Military Strategy through the NZDF Organisational Strategy. It supports the CDF by setting organisational priorities, ensuring the NZDF is structured to meet them, and, through its committees, overseeing delivery of the current in-year plan and the longer-term Integrated Investment Plan. It also governs the delivery of organisational change programmes and other people-related actions and provides a vehicle for oversight of organisational health and safety.



The *Investment Committee*, a subset of the OGB, governs the NZDF's investment portfolio, from investment design (what should be invested in), through delivery (procurement and build), to closure (handover to the relevant system owner and assurance of benefits realisation). The committee makes coordinated and integrated investment decisions to deliver to the Organisational Governance Board's directed priorities. It works to ensure the NZDF can fully exploit its current and future capabilities. It also provides assurance to the CDF that investments are being delivered to scope, budget, and time, and intervenes where necessary.

The *Planning and Performance Committee*, a subset of the OGB, oversees the delivery of the in-year plan and assures the Organisational Governance Board that the NZDF is applying its resources to agreed priorities.

The committee is responsible for ensuring the current activity of the NZDF is sustainable in terms of resources, workforce and outputs. This includes NZDF's enabling functions, Defence Information Environment, and Defence Estate. The Committee works to ensure these functions are prepared to protect New Zealand, in alignment with the Organisational Governance Board's strategic direction.

The *Risk and Assurance Committee* supports the CDF, as Chief Executive of the NZDF, by providing advice on risk management frameworks and assurance functions such as internal control mechanisms and processes. It advises and counsels the NZDF on policies and processes, as well as providing assurance on compliance with legislative requirements and Central Agency policies.

NZDF Strategic Risks

The NZDF is a complex organisation that must be combat-ready; that is, trained, equipped, and ready to respond to an increasingly challenging and uncertain strategic environment. Risk is inherent in everything the NZDF does and must be effectively managed to ensure the successful delivery of Defence strategic objectives and NZDF strategic outcomes and outputs.

The NZDF promotes risk-informed and aware decision making, based on trade-offs between opportunity, benefit, and cost. This approach to risk management (based on ISO 31000:2018) is integrated into the strategy, planning and decision-making processes, and executed through NZDF command and governance structures.

In delivering its strategic intentions, the NZDF must understand and actively manage several key risks:

- Total workforce capacity and the sustainment of critical skills
- Ongoing fiscal constraint and pressure on investment trade offs
- Capability relevance and preparedness in a changing strategic environment
- Decision quality and the integrity, availability, and security of information
- Organisational adaptability to shifting priorities and strategic demands
- Resilience of critical support, logistics, and enabling systems.

NZDF Performance Framework

The NZDF is currently developing a new NZDF Performance Framework which has three streams: Strategic Performance, Output Performance and Organisational Health. Together, these streams provide a collective overview of organisational performance.

Strategic Performance measures the NZDF's progress against the NZDF Organisational Strategy and change within the organisation. As developed, performance measures and reporting approaches will be reviewed and refined to ensure they effectively enable data-driven decision-making practices across the organisation. Performance measures will be reported internally on a regular basis to track progress; ensuring that strategy, outputs, capabilities, and resources are aligned, and identifying any adjustments required for planning.

Output Performance measures the preparedness, activities and services provided by the NZDF, which are set in the Estimates of Appropriation. The primary assessment of performance in relation to output delivery is the ability of the NZDF to meet specific readiness requirements and deploy within directed response times. The performance management system is designed to assess the preparation of the NZDF for future operations, and its ability to sustain current operational demands. The system assesses the capacity across the workforce, equipment and resourcing, training, and logistic support that might be required to deploy and sustain operations. The NZDF monitors these measures and performance targets throughout the year, and reports against them in the NZDF Annual Report. These measures and targets reflect how it has used public funding using a range of qualitative and quantitative approaches to demonstrate performance.

Organisational Health comprises the internal resources, capabilities and enablers that allow the NZDF to meet its requirements and deliver military effects. These functions provide integrated support across the NZDF, with some also directly delivering outputs and effects. The NZDF monitors, evaluates, and reports on this using a range of tools, systems and methods across the organisation, and is currently developing the framework to bring these all together. The framework will use a mixture of qualitative and quantitative measures with linkages to strategic and outputs performance and identify where adjustments or improvements can be made.

As part of the Organisational Health stream, the NZDF has four areas of asset performance with service critical and non-critical assets, which are:

- Specialist Military Equipment
- Logistics
- Estate and Infrastructure
- Information.

A variety of methods, systems and frameworks are used internally to assess the utilisation, availability, condition and functionality of both service critical and non-critical assets, which are reported on in the NZDF Annual Report. The NZDF is working towards maturing these approaches, including strengthening governance and planning frameworks and improving asset data, and aligning these with each other and to the Cabinet Circular CO (23) 9 Investment Management and Asset Performance in Departments and Other Entities.

NZDF Reporting

As part of the NZDF Performance System, the reporting structure is also being revised. This will include the revision of internal and external reporting methods and processes. Internal reporting will be provided to the appropriate Governance Boards, and where relevant, provided to Ministers. Joint Defence reporting is also provided to Ministers and Parliament where needed.

The NZDF meets its statutory requirements by producing an annual report in accordance with the Public Finance Act 1989, reporting against any active Strategic Intentions or Statement of Intent. The NZDF Annual Report provides parliament and the public with performance information each financial year, based around its strategic direction and delivery of outputs. Case studies are used to complement the performance story and illustrate what the NZDF sought to achieve, what actions were taken and the results.





03

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

TE ANGA O TE OPE KĀTUA O AOTEAROA

The NZDF is a modern and professional military that has trained, equipped, and trusted sailors, soldiers, and aviators who have chosen to put themselves in dangerous situations to protect New Zealanders. They help people across the world by fighting for peace, security, and prosperity to protect and promote New Zealand and its interests at home and abroad. New Zealanders' freedoms cannot be taken for granted: the NZDF must be prepared to fight for them. This is what the NZDF does, and it is guided by its vision, purpose and values.



VISION

Ready to fight tonight, tomorrow and together

The NZDF is a resilient, persistent, innovative, and agile fighting force that will respond to security threats immediately and decisively when required. Its core values underpin the profession of arms and are sustained by powerful bonds of comradeship tying them together with a shared purpose: defending New Zealand. NZDF personnel have unwavering determination, courage, and commitment to the military.

PURPOSE

We defend New Zealand and protect its interests

The NZDF is first and foremost a military force. It makes a wide range of contributions to New Zealand's security and community through broad means, but its primary role is as the military arm of the New Zealand Government. It secures the country against external threats and protects its sovereign interests, acting at the Government's direction to meet likely contingencies in the strategic area of interest. The reality of conducting military operations to respond to crises and to protect national interests is that this may involve the spectrum of operations, initiatives and activities up to the threat and use of lethal force.

VALUES

Courage/Tū Kaha Commitment/Tū Tika Comradeship/Tū Tira Integrity/Tū Māia

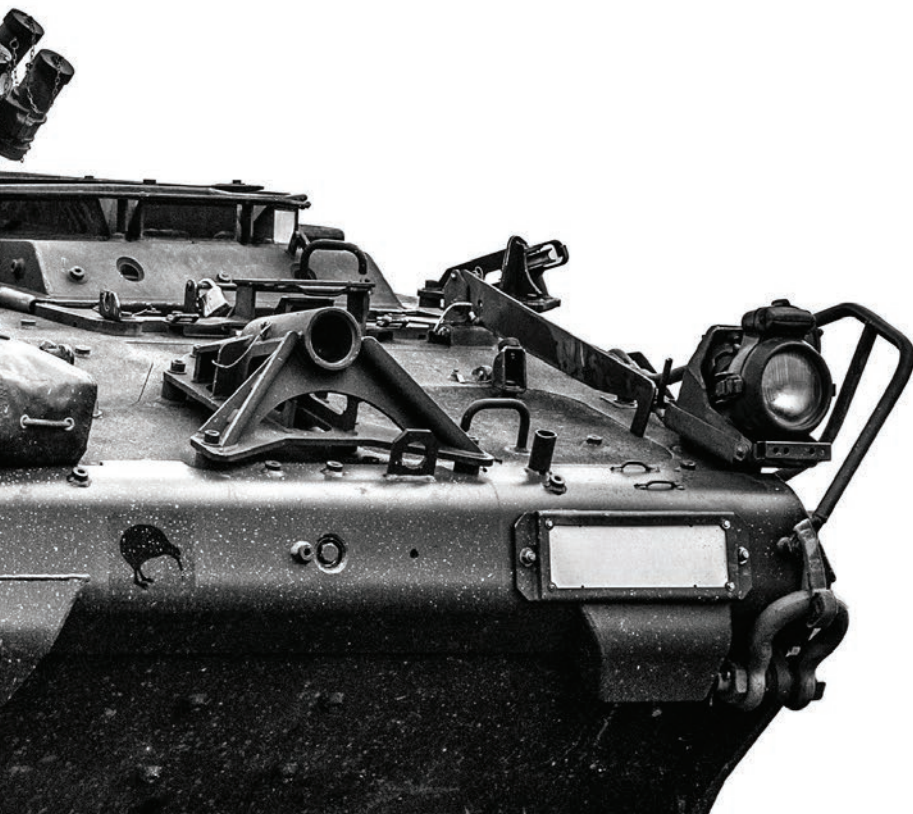
The people of the NZDF share a strong sense of what it means to be New Zealanders. NZDF personnel share a culture underpinned by shared values. This cultural foundation builds an organisation that is united, professionally trained, competent, appropriately equipped, and capable of serving New Zealand's interests, confronting security challenges, and meeting the New Zealand Government's requirements. This culture provides the foundation for New Zealand's approach to conducting military operations.

Courage / Tū Kaha is having the strength – moral and physical – to do what is right, even in the face of adversity. It is about speaking up when things are unfair or wrong, and remaining honest.

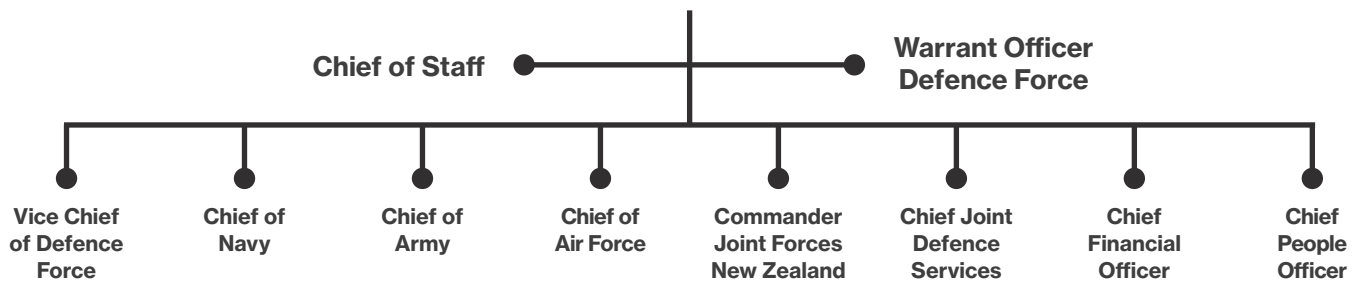
Commitment / Tū Tika means doing your best. It is about looking for ways to get the job done and sticking with something even when it feels impossible. Commitment is about always living and breathing these values. The NZDF is committed to serving New Zealand.

Comradeship / Tū Tira means respecting what makes people different and working as a team. It is about treating others with respect being inclusive.

Integrity / Tū Māia means being honest, ethical and working to the highest professional standards – even when no one is watching. When you have integrity, people trust you to act on your values and to do the right thing.



Chief of Defence Force



LEADERSHIP

The CDF commands and leads the NZDF as the chief executive and is the principal military advisor to Ministers. Its command chain originates from the Crown down to CDF, a three-star officer (with the rank of Vice Admiral, Lieutenant General, or Air Marshal, depending on the Service). The CDF is responsible to the Minister of Defence for the NZDF's conduct and management.

The command chain extends from the CDF directly down to the Service Chiefs of the Royal New Zealand Navy, New Zealand Army, and Royal New Zealand Air Force, along with the Vice Chief of Defence Force, Commander Joint Forces New Zealand and the Chief Joint Defence Services. These roles are military positions and are supported by the Chief of Staff and Warrant Officer Defence Force. The Chief Financial Officer and the Chief People Officer are civilian positions, reporting directly to the CDF.

PEOPLE

The more than 15,000 people working in the NZDF comprise Regular Force, Reserve Force (reservists), and civilians, along with contractors.

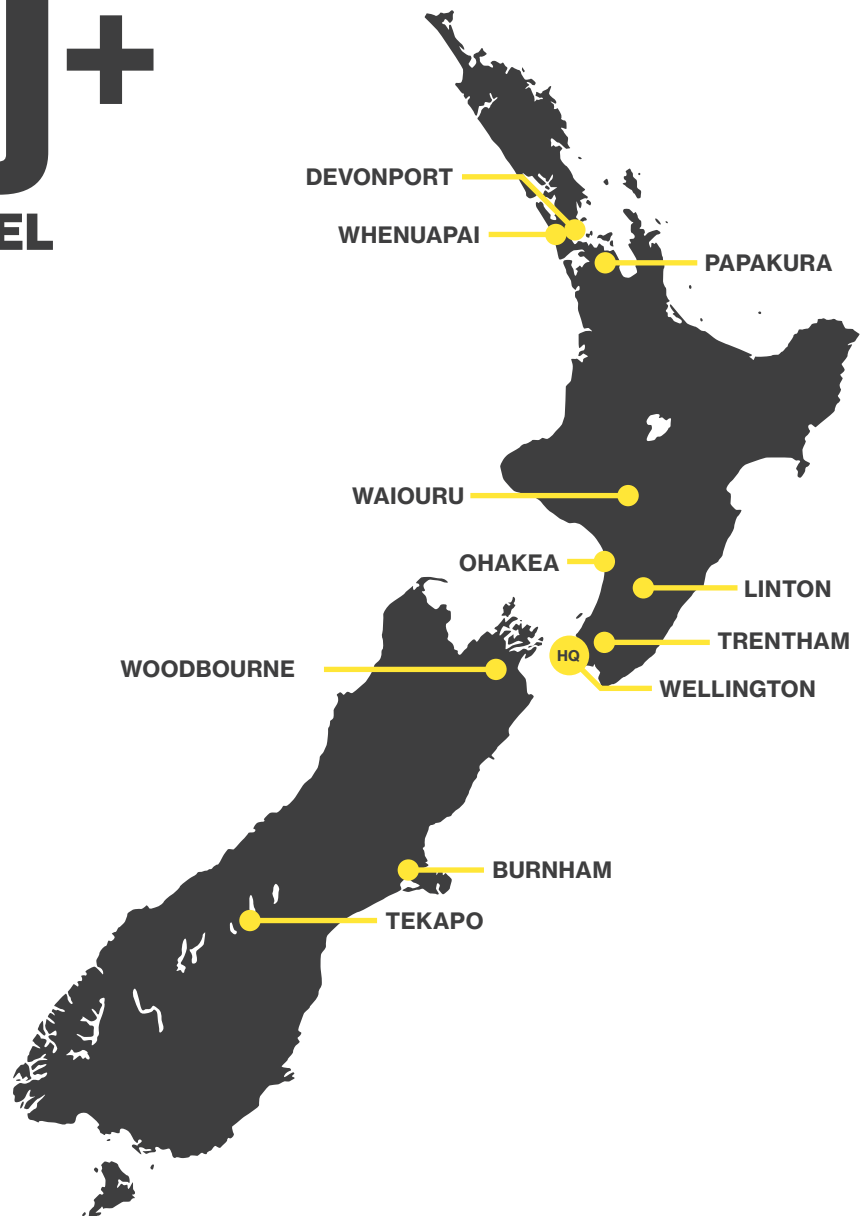
The Regular Force are full-time uniformed members of the Armed Forces: the Navy's sailors, the Army's soldiers, and the Air Force's aviators. They are trained in combat, combat support, and logistics. They have oversight, managerial, corporate, and other roles across the NZDF abroad and in New Zealand.

Reservists are part-time uniformed members who are trained to support and contribute to NZDF capability and output delivery, often by providing specialist skills such as health, law, IT, and emerging technologies. They are a strategic asset that provides a scalable and responsive capability to supplement the Regular Force, particularly in regional civil emergencies as a first response option. They are trained so that they can successfully operate in dangerous and complex conditions and environments.

Civilian staff support the generation of military effects in a broad range of roles in corporate functions, tactical units, bases and camps. They provide specialised skills, knowledge, and services and are sometimes deployed on missions to provide support in areas such as finance, intelligence, and communications. There are also locally employed civilians who work in embassies and high commissions overseas.

Due to previous high attrition rates, changes within the strategic environment and implementation of new capabilities, the NZDF has identified the requirement for a change in how its people functions are managed. Future investments will be identified to grow, shape, and retain the NZDF's workforce to deliver the capabilities identified in the DCP25 through a new workforce strategy, along with related tools and system improvements to meet these requirements.

15,000+ PERSONNEL



CAPABILITIES

Military Capabilities

The NZDF operates and maintains capabilities for sea, land and air. Modern and versatile ships are used for a range of maritime tasks, including combat, peacekeeping operations, border patrol, and support for other government agencies. Other watercraft are also used to deliver maritime capabilities, such as uncrewed autonomous vessels. Military vehicles, which include armoured and light armoured vehicles; light, medium and heavy operational vehicles; and other mobility support vehicles for the delivery of specific capability, provide mobility to NZDF personnel in a range of complex and challenging environments.

The NZDF also has a range of aircraft for training and operations, including four Boeing P-8A Poseidon and five C-130J-30 Super Hercules, smaller aircraft and a range of light and medium utility helicopters. The NZDF is equipped with a range of modern airborne, shipborne, and land-based weapons systems to operate in diverse environments. The DCP25 has set out an extensive investment plan to regenerate the NZDF's military capabilities and ensure its people are equipped with modern and effective technology to protect New Zealand.

Logistics

Logistics is the planning, movement and sustainment of forces. It includes design and development, acquisition, storage, movement distribution, maintenance, evacuation, and disposal of materiel; transport of personnel; acquisition or construction, maintenance, operation, and disposition of facilities; acquisition or furnishing of services; and medical and health support. A critical success factor is a strong and resilient logistics system that will enable NZDF to withstand shocks to the supply chain and support the generation and sustainment of force elements from all three Services. Included in the DCP25 investments is strengthening the resilience of the logistics and supply chain system as a key enabler for military outputs. The profile of the investments is under revision in order to ensure the delivery of the military strategy is able to be logistically sustained.

Estate And Infrastructure

The Defence Estate comprises 81,000 hectares of Crown-owned land with over 4,700 buildings across nine main locations. Military bases and camps provide accommodation and facilities for Defence personnel and equipment, docks, runways, maintenance workshops, storage facilities, training facilities, and offices. DCP25 outlines significant investments to improve the estate. Greater detail can be found in the Defence Estate Portfolio Plan 2025–2040, an executive summary of which is publicly available.

Information

Information and digital technologies make the NZDF more effective and efficient; it is a force multiplier and primary integrator. The NZDF is modernising information and communications technology capabilities to achieve a digitally enabled, data driven and integrated NZDF. This includes putting in place and streamlining the key structures, policies, practices, processes and digital platforms which underpin the NZDF's digital capability. It will equip military personnel to focus on high-value tasks, helping increase their skills, improve readiness and enhance performance through raising the quality of NZDF data and analytical capabilities. A strong information system helps build a robust network of governmental, military, industry and academic partnerships, and helps maintain partner interoperability and information sharing. The NZDF is unifying within Information Command its existing capabilities across Information Warfare, Digital and Cyberspace and Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations. Investments in the DCP25 include the modernisation of digital systems and information management, enhancing cyber security capabilities, enterprise resource planning, updating classified digital services, and the technology accelerator.

Defence Science and Technology

Science and technology are essential to equipping and integrating modern NZDF capabilities, ensuring a strategic edge as technologies become more complex and require deeper assessment, experimentation and modelling. This specialist function reduces operational risk by delivering scientific support directly into NZDF platforms, systems, operations and planning, across military domains. DCP25 signals targeted investment to strengthen the resilience of Defence science and technology and enables focused development in areas such as space, uncrewed systems, cyber and electronic warfare. Strong partnerships with academia, industry and the scientific community remain vital to scaling innovation and ensuring this work delivers broader value and impact across the NZDF and its key security partners.

Major Investments 2025–2028

To respond to the deteriorating strategic environment the NZDF needs to be increasingly combat capable, interoperable with its partners, able to act as a force multiplier with Australia, and make the most of innovations which allow it to be more effective.

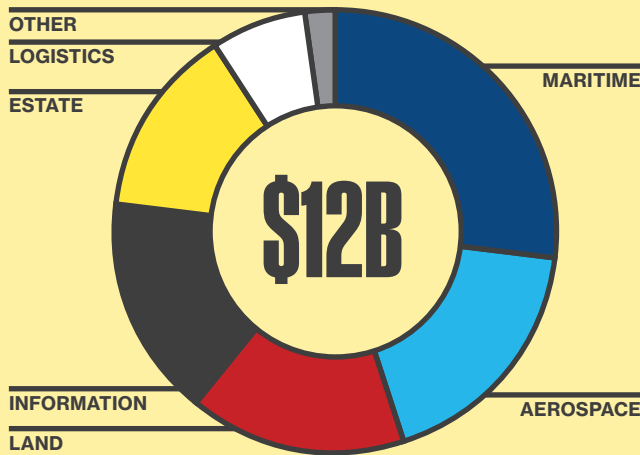
To do this over the next 15 years, investment will be in:

- A focused and combat capable Navy with a mixture of combat, patrol, and multirole ships, augmented by uncrewed systems.
- An Army that can operate independently, integrate with Australia, has improved strike capabilities, and is fully networked to provide a combat effect.
- An Air Force that operates globally, with select combat capability, and which provides situational awareness and intelligence.
- Strengthened cyber and information capabilities to protect the NZDF's networks and systems, and provide defensive cyber, electronic and information warfare effects.
- A workforce with the physical and digital infrastructure that is fit-for-purpose for a modern defence force.

MAJOR INVESTMENTS 2025–2028

The Defence Capability Plan outlines indicative spending of \$12 billion on major capability and critical supports over the next four years. These indicative investments focus on what is required in the short term to rebuild the NZDF and prepare for future.

Indicative spend by area



-  Enhanced strike capabilities
-  Frigate sustainment programme
-  Persistent surveillance (uncrewed autonomous vessels)
-  Replacing the maritime helicopters
-  Javelin anti-tank missile upgrade
-  Network Enabled Army
-  Special Operations sustainment
-  Vehicles for the NZDF
-  Counter Uncrewed Aerial Systems
-  Long-range remotely piloted aircraft (drones)
-  Replacing the Boeing 757 fleet
-  Space capabilities
-  Enhancing cyber security capabilities
-  Enterprise resource planning
-  Improved intelligence functions
-  Updating classified digital services
-  Accommodation, messing, and dining modernisation
-  Defence estate regeneration
-  Defence housing programme
-  Future Devonport naval base design
-  Ohakea infrastructure programme
-  Defence Science & Technology uplift
-  Technology Accelerator
-  Information management
-  Digital modernisation
-  Logistics resilience
-  Consolidated Logistics Project infrastructure
-  Implementing a workforce strategy

ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENTS

NZDF Climate Resilience

Climate change is reshaping New Zealand's strategic environment and is now a central driver of defence policy, capability planning, and operational readiness. The NZDF recognises climate change as a major security challenge, one that amplifies humanitarian crises, intensifies security pressures across the

Indo-Pacific, and creates new demands on Defence as both a responder and a steward of national resilience.

The NZDF's mission is clear: protect New Zealand's interests while adapting to a rapidly changing environment. To achieve this, the NZDF must be Combat Ready – Climate Resilient. This means leading with foresight and innovation, operating smarter and more efficiently, and embedding climate considerations across all aspects of Defence. The NZDF has three strategic priorities for this:

1

CLIMATE-READY OPERATIONS AND FORCE DESIGN

Ensuring its people, platforms, and systems can operate effectively in climate-impacted environments, from domestic emergencies and regional humanitarian missions to combat operations.

2

RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUPPLY CHAINS

Managing climate-related risks to bases, logistics, and energy systems, and strengthening partnerships to protect critical functions.

3

SUSTAINABLE CAPABILITY TRANSITION

Supporting Government climate objectives through capability planning that embeds climate-considered sustainability and resilience and reducing emissions where practicable.

Climate change is not a discrete issue for Defence, it is a strategic condition shaping how the NZDF prepares, operates, and partners in a rapidly evolving world. These commitments position the NZDF to meet climate-driven challenges while safeguarding New Zealand's security interests.

NZDF Sustainability

The NZDF has a deliberate approach to managing its environmental and social risks, impacts and opportunities, both to and from the NZDF, while maintaining operational readiness, sustainment, and credibility. The NZDF has developed a strategic framework for enhancing the sustainability of the NZDF estate and it is now developing the pan-NZDF direction. While environmental changes and societal stresses are complex and interconnected, sustainability principles and change action will strengthen the NZDF's resilience and partnerships.

A key focus is enhancing the NZDF's understanding and addressing environmental security challenges in the Indo-Pacific region, as well as reducing its impact on those very challenges. Environmental security involves the threats posed by environmental and natural hazard events and trends that have the potential to degrade peace and stability of nations and the basic wellbeing of people. Environmental security is often a threat multiplier that produces security issues through complex interactions with other factors. Such environmental changes might include natural resource degradation; natural disasters; waste and pollution; climate change; and land, freshwater, ocean and atmospheric changes.

Strengthening Māori-Crown Relationship

The NZDF will continue to support the Crown's vision to strengthen its engagement and partnership with Māori. Kia Eke, the NZDF Māori Strategic Framework, describes the goals and outcomes that support the Crown's vision, together with bringing to affect the NZDF's obligations within Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The continued development of its people, processes and systems is required to better support the relationships with Māori.

- **WAI 2500** – The Military Veterans Kaupapa Inquiry (WAI 2500) is hearing claims involving past Māori military service undertaken directly for, or on behalf of, the Crown in right of New Zealand. The Inquiry is an opportunity for the NZDF to consider improvements as to how service people, veterans and their whānau, can better be supported; whether their service has been operational or routine, in time of war or peace, at home or abroad.
- **Te reo Māori** – The ongoing development of an NZDF Māori Language Plan will support the uplift of people capability and contribute to the Crown's strategy for Māori language revitalisation across government and New Zealand society.

Support to Veterans

The support NZDF provides for veterans through VA is broad, ranging from processing applications, and making decisions on compensation or services, to calculating reimbursements, making relevant payments, and delivering follow-up support. More than 6,000 veterans have case managers, with VA staff maintaining contact and ensuring they receive the support and services they are entitled to. While VA is not itself a health service provider, it funds treatment and rehabilitation which can be provided to those who have a service-related illness or injury. It also offers a programme, based on needs and delivered by third party providers, designed to keep veterans safe and independent in their own homes.

VA also provides policy advice to the Minister for Veterans, administrative support for three independent boards, as set out in the Act, supports commemorations honouring veterans, and contributes to the maintenance of services cemeteries throughout New Zealand where qualifying veterans and their partners may be buried. It works closely with other government agencies and non-government organisations that support and advocate for veterans.



HEI MANA MŌ AOTEAROA
A FORCE FOR NEW ZEALAND



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government