



Headquarters
New Zealand Defence Force
Defence House
Private Bag 39997
Wellington Mail Centre
Lower Hutt 5045
New Zealand

OIA-2026-5729

28th
May 2026

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 26 March 2026 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), the following:

- *All information sent by or held by or received by the Chief of Defence relating to NZ Army's bicultural policy from January 1 this year;*
- *All information sent by or held by or received by the Chief of Army relating to NZ Army's bicultural policy from January 1 this year.*

This request should also be considered as to apply to information held, sent or received by the Chiefs of Staff for the CDF and CAF.

I apologise for the delay in responding to you. The Chief of Defence Force (CDF) received a copy of the relevant Army General Order in mid to late February for his information. He had discussions with senior New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) staff concerning this around the same time, as well as a telephone discussion with the Minister of Defence. No further details of these discussions have been recorded.

With respect to *information sent by or held by or received by the Chief of Army*, relevant correspondence is enclosed. Personal correspondence provided in confidence is withheld in full in accordance with sections 9(2)(a) and 9(2)(ba)(i) of the OIA. Legal advice is withheld in full in accordance with section 9(2)(h) of the OIA to maintain legal professional privilege. Where indicated, personal information is withheld to protect privacy in accordance with section 9(2)(a) of the OIA; and, information connected to advice is withheld to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs in accordance with section 9(2)(g)(i) of the OIA.

In addition to the correspondence, the following extract concerning the New Zealand Army's Bicultural Policy is from a 16 February 2026 report by the Principle Chaplain Army to the Chief of Army and others:

Chaplaincy is also aligning with the Army Bicultural Policy, ensuring all our Chaplains can operate confidently within te ao Māori and incorporating bicultural practice into pastoral, ceremonial, and wellbeing contexts. This also involves regular engagement in marae settings, support to powhiri, and meaningful partnership with Māori cultural leaders.

From: s. 9(2)(a)
Sent: Thursday, 19 March 2026 11:02 am
To: Ministerial Services
Cc: King, Rose, MAJGEN; s. 9(2)(a); Sellwood, John, CAPT RNZN; Motley, Grant, BRIG
Subject: Request for Information: Army Bicultural Policy
Attachments: OIA-2026-5679-s. 9(2)(a)-draft-response.docx; OIA-2026-5679-Enclosure-1-working.pdf; OIA-2026-5679-Enclosure-2.pdf

Good morning everyone –

I have had a query from the office following up on OIA-2026-5679 and the Army Bicultural Policy. Can you please confirm that the policy was live for three weeks before the Minister was made aware of it?

Thank you

s. 9(2)(a)

From: King, Rose, MAJGEN
Sent: Tuesday, 10 March 2026 11:18 am
To: Preece, Dewi
Subject: RE: PAYWALLED - NZ Herald Army bicultural story [UNCLASSIFIED]

Thanks Dewi

From: Preece, Dewi
Sent: Tuesday, 10 March 2026 11:13 am
To: King, Rose, MAJGEN ; s. 9(2)(a) ; Gibbons, Hamish, BRIG ; Michie, Roz, LTCOL
Subject: Fw: PAYWALLED - NZ Herald Army bicultural story [UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Mōrena, apologies I'm a bit slow clearing through some things this morning but please find below a paywalled version of Fisher's latest article on the bicultural policy.

s. 9(2)(g)(i)

OCDF already tracking a copy I believe

Dewi Preece
Public Affairs Manager (Army)

DPA, Defence Public Affairs | Te Ope Kātua o Aotearoa | New Zealand Defence Force

Mobile: 021 919 843
www.nzdf.mil.nz

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
✓	✓			✓

Army's entire bicultural policy on hold amid apparent Defence Force confusion

[David Fisher](#)
Senior writer NZ Herald
10 Mar, 2026 10:16 AM

The Minister of Defence and the Army paused the cultural framework. Now they are talking about pausing the entire bicultural policy. David Fisher reports.

A former Army officer claims there is confusion all the way to the top of the Defence Force over its bicultural policy.

Last month, the new "cultural skills framework" was paused after coalition partners raised concerns - yet now it seems the military's entire bicultural policy is on hold, he said.

This follows intense political scrutiny of the policy, first reported by the Herald, and a shift in the language Minister of Defence Judith Collins has been using about it.

The former officer, who spoke on the condition he would not be named, questioned why it has been so unclear which aspects of the policy have been put on ice.

The Army's new bicultural policy was launched on January 28, with the intention of unifying personnel around the incorporation of a strong te ao Māori identity.

Inside that policy was a "framework" that formed part of the direction-setting, with goals for Army leaders to aim for - such as knowing two waiata, or taking te reo Māori language lessons.

The Army and Collins first responded to Herald questions about the new direction saying the "framework" was on hold - then later made it clear the entire policy was on hold.

The former officer said the clear difference between the big-picture document and the smaller framework it contained meant there shouldn't have been any confusion. He said both the policy and the framework were unpopular among many current and former Army personnel.

The man speculated that the minister's office and NZDF were caught on the hop and bungled the initial public phrasing.

But he said it could equally be that the Army was reluctant to backpedal on the big-picture document.

He said it was possible the Army had put forward the framework to be paused and, in so doing, faced further scrutiny from Collins' office and the subsequent pause on the whole policy.

The source said the situation would be humbling for Chief of Army Major-General Rose King.

A former senior NCO, who was also critical of the policy, said it attempted to drive top-down Māoritanga that had previously filtered up from the ranks, where command enabled it to permeate Army culture.

When King launched the controversial new policy, she told soldiers it would be a new approach, intended to shape the fighting force around a shared identity.

Formally titled "Army General Orders – Personnel Part 1: Ngāti Tūmatauenga", the policy built on the Army's characterisation of itself as an iwi of the Māori god of war.

While that styling has been core since 1994, the policy took it further, formally codifying and embedding it - and te ao Māori practices - into daily operations and philosophy.

King's policy launch material characterised the move as necessary to strengthen cohesion in the face of modern conflict.

"In today's environment of modern conflict, adversaries use disinformation, influence operations, and psychological tactics to fracture cohesion and trust," she said.

"Their goal is to divide us internally before engaging us externally. By strengthening our cultural understanding and shared identity we can defend against these threats."

Then, about two weeks later, Collins was alerted to the new policy by the Act Party's Todd Stephenson and then NZ First's Winston Peters.

The Herald confirmed with Collins' office that she had been unaware of the new policy until then.

What followed was an abrupt halt - and apparent confusion over what was actually being put on hold.

Last month, NZDF said in two statements that it was the "cultural framework" that had been paused.

One of the statements read the "cultural skills framework has been paused to enable broader consultation".

"The framework was contained within the Army bicultural policy. The Army agrees the framework needs further consideration."

Collins used the same language, saying: "I was made aware of the framework only this week and immediately sought further information from Army leadership. I am advised that the Army has paused implementation of the framework to allow for broader consultation."

The use of the phrase "cultural skills framework" appeared to refer only to a part of the overall bicultural policy.

Inside the policy, is "Annex 2B" - the "New Zealand Army Cultural Skills Framework" - which was introduced by a section of the bicultural policy with these words: "This framework is intended to develop the cultural skills and knowledge of both Māori and non-Māori members of Ngāti Tūmatauenga, the NZ Army."

“Whilst this framework is aspirational and future focussed, its intent is to ensure the organisation, each level of leadership, and each rank, role and individual, has a clear understanding and direction for continual improvement.”

The wider policy, though, was seen by former service personnel spoken to by the Herald as far more controversial than the framework inside it.

The policy said the Army sought to “achieve a bicultural status by enabling the recognition of Māori cultural interests as they are guaranteed within Te Tiriti o Waitangi”.

The policy placed Māori cosmology at the centre of its identity, describing how the narrative of Tūmatauenga reflects struggle, resilience, leadership and the balance between war and peace. It referenced other atua including Rongo (peace), Papatūānuku (Earth Mother), and Hine-nui-te-pō (death), stating that the balance between these forces should inform the Army’s approach.

The policy put in place governance structures including Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Tūmatauenga as an authoritative advisory body on te ao Māori matters in the Army.

It also set out a vision of the Army as an expeditionary combat force strengthened by bicultural heritage and reflective of New Zealand society. In doing so, it linked identity to operational effectiveness saying shared values underpinned the Army’s ability to “fight and win”.

In contrast, the annexed cultural skills framework set out competency expectations at different leadership levels.

Those included Army leaders using tikanga Māori in day-to-day office practice, singing at least two common waiata, performing a simple karakia from memory, and reciting pepeha.

It was this framework that NZDF initially said had been paused.

NZDF has now stated the two “cannot be paused in isolation”, effectively broadening its [original public description](#) of what had been halted.

NZDF initially stated: “The Army’s cultural skills framework has been paused to enable broader consultation. The framework was contained within the Army bicultural policy. The Army agrees the framework needs further consideration.”

[The Herald raised](#) with NZDF and the minister’s office the “pause” of the “cultural skills framework” and asked about the status of the broader bicultural policy.

In a further email, the language from NZDF’s public affairs office shifted to talk about the “policy”.

An NZDF spokesman said “the framework was contained within the policy”.

“Neither the framework nor the policy can be paused in isolation.”

The NZDF spokesman and Collins’ spokeswoman said [the bicultural policy has been paused](#) for “broader consultation”.

The Herald has asked the minister’s office and the Army to explain the shift in language from the “framework” to the “bicultural policy” being on hold. Neither has responded.

Ian Martyn, a former Royal NZ Air Force and then Army serviceman of 37 years, said he believed the policy was exclusionary and would have the effect of contorting the service.

Martyn - who now dedicates himself to reuniting service people with their medals - said the British roots of the three services now had a Maori “overlay” which tied progress through a military career to acceptance of a cultural lean.

“We are no longer the culturally neutral organisation that we were.”

Act MP Todd Stephenson appeared the first to raise concerns, with a letter to Collins on February 10 about both the policy and the framework.

He said the framework imposed ideological requirements beyond what would normally be expected of a politically neutral public service.

Stephenson asked “this policy and framework be reviewed as a matter of priority to ensure they align with the Government’s expectations and the principle of equal treatment regardless of background or belief.”

His party leader Seymour later told the Herald: “They are taking sides on an issue Parliament has recently debated and that is not something any Defence Force should be doing.”

Peters told the Herald the document was “totally inappropriate” and said he had raised it directly with Collins.

From: King, Rose, MAJGEN
Sent: Friday, 27 February 2026 7:15 am
To: Michie, Roz, LTCOL
Subject: Re: Command Post post [UNCLASSIFIED]

Thanks Roz

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Michie, Roz, LTCOL
Sent: Thursday, February 26, 2026 5:14:29 PM
To: King, Rose, MAJGEN
Subject: RE: Command Post post [UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

It is down, Ma'am.

Roz

LTCOL Roz Michie, BA, GDip(Ed), MM(PM), psc (j), MSS
Acting Assistant Chief of Army Operations (A/G3), Army General Staff
New Zealand Army | Ngāti Tūmatauenga

s. 9(2)(a) [REDACTED] |

s. 9(2)(a) [REDACTED], www.nzdf.mil.nz



UNCLASSIFIED

From: King, Rose, MAJGEN
Sent: Thursday, 26 February 2026 4:02 pm
To: Michie, Roz, LTCOL
Subject: FW: Command Post post [UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Kia ora Roz,

Are we able to take down this message from our Command Post noting the policy is currently unavailable.

Ngā mihi nui,

CA

UNCLASSIFIED

From: s. 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 26 February 2026 3:33 pm
To: King, Rose, MAJGEN
Subject: Command Post post [UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi CA

The below text is still on the Command Post page, even though the policy link to the Pers Orders shows the bicultural policy is down for more work. CoS raised whether we want to leave this message up or not, considering the policy is paused?

Maybe it could be modified to simply point to the Pers Orders.

s. 9(2)(g)(i)

29 January 2026

MESSAGE FROM CA – LAUNCH OF NGATI TUMATAUENGA POLICY, OUR BICULTURAL POLICY

Tena koutou katoa e te whanau o Ngati Tumatauenga, nga hoia, nga apiha me o tatou whanau tautoko, tena koutou, tena koutou, tena tatou katoa.

He honore nui tenei ki te korero atu ki a koutou i tenei wa hei Tumu Whakarae, a, hei hoa haere ano hoki i tenei haerenga. He mea nui kia noho kotahi tatou, kia marama hoki ki te huarahi e anga atu nei tatou.

Greetings to you all, the whanau of Ngati Tumatauenga, our soldiers, our officers, our civilian staff, and the families who support us. It is a great honour to speak with you as the Chief of Army, and also as one who walks this journey alongside you. It is important that we remain united and clear about the path we are moving forward on together.

Today I am proud to announce the release of the [Ngati Tumatauenga policy](#), our new bicultural frame-work that will strengthen the cohesion and identity, which underpin our ability to fight and win.

I urge you all to read the linked [message outlining the broader context](#) for the policy and the next steps, as well as the policy itself.

Take the time to understand it and think how it may impact you on your journey as a member of Ngati Tumatauenga, the New Zealand Army. Please raise any questions through your Chain of Command or to the Welfare and Culture team within Army General Staff.

Our core mission remains clear: delivering land combat-capable force elements ready to fight and win. Cohesion and resilience, grounded in our shared identity as Ngati Tumatauenga, make that possible.

Ko tenei kaupapa ahurea rua he pou mo to tatou kotahitanga me to tatou whakaute tetahi ki tetahi. Mai i tenei ra, kia whakatinana tatou i enei uara i ia ra.

This bicultural policy is a pillar for our unity and for the respect we show one another. From this day forward, let us live these values in our actions every day.

Tena koutou, tena tatou katoa.

Nga mihi,

Major General Rose King
Chief of Army

s. 9(2)(g)(i)

Chief Advisor Public Affairs – Office of Chief of Defence Force HQ NZDF
Te Ope Kātua o Aotearoa | New Zealand Defence Force

s. 9(2)(a)

www.nzdf.mil.nz



UNCLASSIFIED

From: s. 9(2)(g)(i)
Sent: Thursday, 26 February 2026 12:42 pm
To: Erica Julian; s. 9(2)(a); Motley, Grant, BRIG; Sellwood, John, CAPT RNZN; s. 9(2)(a); Vale, Tony; Dalgleish, Samantha; Williams, David; Eden, Sue; Hall, Tracy; Preece, Dewi; s. 9(2)(a); Mason, Alex
Subject: FW: NZ Herald - bicultural policy frozen [UNCLASSIFIED]

Going to NZ Herald.

As you are aware the framework was contained within the policy. Neither the framework nor the policy can be paused in isolation. As we told you last Friday the policy is paused to enable broader consultation. The NZDF has nothing further to add.

UNCLASSIFIED

From: David Fisher <David.Fisher@nzme.co.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 25 February 2026 3:05 pm
To: Williams, David <David.Williams@nzdf.mil.nz>
Subject: Re: NZ Herald - bicultural policy frozen [UNCLASSIFIED]

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Thanks. I have no record of that arriving, either in inbox, junk or trash.

Whether Friday or today though, it doesn't clarify how all the messaging was about the "cultural framework" and now it is about the policy.

I'm clear on the difference but I am confused how the public was told by NZDF and by the Minister that the "framework" was paused when it was the whole policy that was paused.

From: Williams, David <David.Williams@nzdf.mil.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 25 February 2026 2:54 pm
To: David Fisher <David.Fisher@nzme.co.nz>
Subject: FW: NZ Herald - bicultural policy frozen [UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Hello David,
The bicultural policy, which contains the framework, was paused last week to enable broader consultation. We clarified this with you on Friday in a response sent at 6.58pm. (see attached)

Ngā mihi

Dave Williams

Senior Communications Advisor - Defence Public Affairs
Te Ope Kātua o Aotearoa | New Zealand Defence Force
Mobile: 021 925 745
www.nzdf.mil.nz



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UNCLASSIFIED

From: David Fisher <David.Fisher@nzme.co.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 25 February 2026 1:59 pm
To: @Media <Media@nzdf.mil.nz>
Subject: NZ Herald - bicultural policy frozen

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Hi there,

I have not had a response on the query below yet.

However, the Minister's office has responded saying it is the entire "bicultural policy" that is paused, and not just the framework which is only a part of the policy

NZDF's two statements last week on this - to the Herald and to ZB - were clear to say it was the "framework" that was paused. The Minister's statement on Friday was also clear saying the "framework" has been paused.

Today the Minister's position is different and I'm trying to understand how it has shifted from Friday.

Could you come back to me on this as soon as possible please?

I will be writing a piece saying the Minister has shifted the goalposts and that the Herald has been asking this question of NZDF since Friday without response.

David

From: David Fisher <David.Fisher@nzme.co.nz>
Sent: Friday, 20 February 2026 4:47 pm

To: media@nzdf.mil.nz <media@nzdf.mil.nz>
Subject: Fw: NZ Herald - FYI unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi there,

Sent this back to Dave but not sure if he is still there. Is this possible to resolve tonight?

From: David Fisher <David.Fisher@nzme.co.nz>
Sent: Friday, 20 February 2026 4:44 pm
To: Williams, David <David.Williams@nzdf.mil.nz>
Subject: Re: NZ Herald - FYI unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]

So the bicultural policy is still a live thing then? And is it only the framework that is on pause?

Winston Peters and David Seymour are of the understanding the whole policy is paused. Judith Collins says - as does NZDF in this statement - that the framework is paused.

I've got the documentation around this. The "framework" is only part of the policy. I'm not sure everyone is talking about the same thing as the issues Mr Peters and Mr Seymour have go beyond the "framework", and - according to them - so do the Minister's issues.

From: Williams, David <David.Williams@nzdf.mil.nz>
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Kia ora David,

The Army's cultural skills framework has been paused to enable broader consultation. The framework was contained within the Army bicultural policy. The Army agrees the framework needs further consideration.

This may be attributed to an NZDF spokesperson if required.

Ngā mihi

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Hi there,

Letting you know I'm writing a piece on the Ngāti Tūmatauenga Policy, of which I have a copy. I've sent the questions below to the Minister.

NZDF may wish to comment.

I will be reporting that it is unclear whether the whole policy is now on hold. NZDF may wish to clarify that.

I'll be filing about 4pm.

Thanks,

David Fisher
NZ Herald
021347154

From: David Fisher <David.Fisher@nzme.co.nz>
Sent: Friday, 20 February 2026 12:41 pm
To: Sharon Lundy <sharon.lundy@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject: NZ Herald - questions for the Minister

Hi Sharon,

I see ZB had a story about elements of the Army's new doctrine this morning. I'm doing a piece that covers the entire approach and was keen to hear from the Minister on this ahead of filing this afternoon.

I'd like to hear back by 4pm thanks.

The Minister may be up for an interview but if not the issues I want to resolve include:

Whether she was consulted (of if not would expect to have been) ahead of the Ngāti Tūmatauenga Policy being included in Army general orders on January 28?

If she has - as I have had reported to me - had "stern words" with the Chief of Army about the direction of the policy? And what has she said to the CDF on this?

If implementation is continuing as planned or has been slowed or effectively put on hold, and who has made the decisions around this?

Does the Minister agree with the kaupapa as it is expressed, that identity-based cohesion strengthens trust across the whole force and makes it resistant to psychological warfare and similar external pressures? And if not, what direction does she consider appropriate?

Does the Minister consider the shift of time, attention, and organisational effort could take from or contribute to readiness, retention, or operational output?

What are the Minister's thoughts around the framing of Māori cosmology in the policy and its intent to shape military decision-making, behaviour, and operational ethos?

David Fisher
NZ Herald
021347154

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Sent: Wednesday, 25 February 2026 2:43 pm
To: Erica Julian; s. 9(2)(a); Motley, Grant, BRIG; Sellwood, John, CAPT RNZN; s. 9(2)(a); Vale, Tony; Dalglish, Samantha; Williams, David; Eden, Sue; Hall, Tracy; Preece, Dewi; s. 9(2)(a); Mason, Alex
Subject: FW: NZ Herald - bicultural policy frozen [UNCLASSIFIED]
Attachments: RE NZ Herald - FYI unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]

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From: s. 9(2)(g)(i)
Sent: Wednesday, 25 February 2026 10:15 am
To: Erica Julian; s. 9(2)(a); Motley, Grant, BRIG; Sellwood, John, CAPT RNZN; s. 9(2)(a); Vale, Tony; Dalgleish, Samantha; Williams, David; Eden, Sue; Hall, Tracy; Preece, Dewi; s. 9(2)(a); Mason, Alex
Subject: bicultural policy [UNCLASSIFIED]

Going to NZ Herald.

We have no further comment to make to that which was supplied to NZME and the NZ Herald last week.

UNCLASSIFIED

From: Joseph Lose <joseph.lose@nzme.co.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 25 February 2026 7:56 am
To: NZDF Public Affairs <NZDFPublicAffairs@nzdf.mil.nz>
Subject: An NZDF spokesman said the "cultural skills framework" part of the bicultural policy had been paused.

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Kia ora, has there been any surveys of NZDF on the rank and files views of the bicultural policy?

1. Who developed the policy?
2. How long has it been used?
3. What has been the feedback?
4. Has there been any NZDF totally opposed to it?
5. The Māori culture and spirit runs deep in the NZDF. Is this just politicking?
6. NZDF seemed to be caught in the politics of an election year, what's it like for NZDF staff watching this play out in the media?

I would appreciate any help that would help a balanced approach to this story.

Nga mihi

Joe

Joseph Los'e
Kaupapa Māori Editor
NZ Herald

E: Joseph.lose@nzme.co.nz

Ph: +64 0280007546

[nzherald/kāhu](#)

NZME. NEW ZEALAND
MEDIA AND
ENTERTAINMENT

From: s. 9(2)(g)(i)
Sent: Wednesday, 25 February 2026 8:13 am
To: Ministerial Services; Beck, Darren
Cc: s. 9(2)(a); Motley, Grant, BRIG; Sellwood, John, CAPT RNZN; Preece, Dewi
Subject: Bicultural policy

In sum, this is what the Minister's Office signed us off saying about this matter as of the end of last week.

The NZ Army's bicultural policy has been paused by the Chief of Army to enable broader consultation, after the Minister of Defence became aware of it. The Army agrees it needs further consideration.

As for the what the Minister thinks, that is political commentary for the Office to do.

From: Preece, Dewi
Sent: Tuesday, 24 February 2026 6:12 pm
To: King, Rose, MAJGEN
Subject: Re: Bicultural programme unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]



UNCLASSIFIED

Fab thanks for the quick response

Dewi Preece
Public Affairs Manager (Army)

DPA, Defence Public Affairs | Te Ope Kātua o Aotearoa | New Zealand Defence Force

Mobile: 021 919 843
www.nzdf.mil.nz

Mon ✓ **Tue** ✓ **Wed**  **Thu**  **Fri** ✓

UNCLASSIFIED

From: King, Rose, MAJGEN
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2026 6:07:49 PM
To: Preece, Dewi
Subject: Re: Bicultural programme unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Thanks Dewi, support this response.

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UNCLASSIFIED

From: Preece, Dewi
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2026 6:04:18 PM
To: King, Rose, MAJGEN
Subject: Fw: Bicultural programme unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Rose,

See below - basically David Fisher trying to again draw a distinction between the Policy and the Framework. Barring any newer information or direction you've been provided by MINDEF or CDF, I think it's the same response as it was on Friday:

As has been previously communicated, the policy has been paused to enable broader consultation.

Dewi Preece

Public Affairs Manager (Army)

DPA, Defence Public Affairs | Te Ope Kātua o Aotearoa | New Zealand Defence Force

Mobile: 021 919 843

www.nzdf.mil.nz

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
✓	✓			✓

UNCLASSIFIED

From: Preece, Dewi

Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2026 5:32 PM

To: s. 9(2)(g)(i) ; s. 9(2)(a)

Cc: s. 9(2)(a)

Subject: Re: Bicultural programme unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]

Ack, will get something through tonight

Dewi Preece

Public Affairs Manager (Army)

DPA, Defence Public Affairs | Te Ope Kātua o Aotearoa | New Zealand Defence Force

Mobile: 021 919 843

www.nzdf.mil.nz

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
✓	✓			✓

From: s. 9(2)(g)(i)

Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2026 5:15:44 PM

To: s. 9(2)(a)

Cc: Preece, Dewi ; s. 9(2)(a)

Subject: Re: Bicultural programme unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Ack s. 9(2)(a)

Dewi: OTY. I presume the answer is something like, as you were told last Friday by NZDF, the bicultural policy has been taken down for further consultation.

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From: s. 9(2)(a)
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2026 4:25:16 PM
To: s. 9(2)(g)(i)
Cc: Preece, Dewi ; s. 9(2)(a)
Subject: Fw: Bicultural programme
Hi s. 9(2)(g)(i)

Can we please get a response to the query below - it is asking specifics about the exact parts of the Army General Order Personnel that have been paused.

Could we please get feedback before 10am tomorrow.

Thank you

s. 9(2)(a)

From: Erica Julian
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2026 4:19:17 PM
To: s. 9(2)(a)
Cc: s. 9(2)(a)
Subject: FW: Bicultural programme
Hi s. 9(2)(a), as discussed.
Thanks,
Erica

From: David Fisher
Sent: Tuesday, 24 February 2026 4:10 PM
To: Erica Julian
Subject: Bicultural programme
Hi Erica,
Just following up on the issue around the bicultural "Army General Orders Personnel" and the cultural framework contained therein.
NZDF's statement (and the Minister's statement) referred to the framework as being "paused" or "on hold". I was keen to check with the Minister what it means that the framework is paused but not the "Army General Orders Personnel".
Does that indicate the Chief of Army has the Minister's support for the wider General Orders but not the framework?
Thank you,
David Fisher
NZ Herald
021347154

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From: NZDF Public Affairs
Sent: Monday, 23 February 2026 8:44 am
Subject: DPA Morning News Snapshot Monday, 23 February 2026 [UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Defence Public Affairs

Morning News Snapshot

Mōrena,

Below is the daily morning roundup of NZDF issues, media coverage, online news updates and upcoming key events. This complements the DPA PM media brief, which captures media Q&A during the day.

Please Note: Both the Morning News Snapshot and Daily Media Brief are for **internal purposes only** and should not be circulated outside the NZDF.

If you wish to subscribe/unsubscribe, please email publicaffairs@nzdf.govt.nz

Accessing links on Modern Desktop: Users can read the below articles by clicking the links in Outlook via the DIXS reach back function. A new and improved version of Internet-to-desktop is coming to the Modern Desktop function.

NZ Media | Mentions

Newstalk ZB | February 20, 2026 • 12:14 AM

Cultural skills framework for Army personnel paused after leadership concerns raised

The implementation of a cultural skills framework for Army personnel has been paused after concerns were raised with the Defence Minister about potential requirements for leaders to know waiata and karakia off by heart. ACT MP Todd Stephenson wrote to Defence Minister Judith Collins after being sent a copy of the framework, saying it appeared to go beyond normal expectations of the Public Service.

READ MORE


Herald on Sunday (Print version) | February 22, 2026 • 2:49 AM

Army's bicultural plan shocks

From: Preece, Dewi
Sent: Friday, 20 February 2026 6:35 pm
To: King, Rose, MAJGEN
Subject: Fw: Newstalk ZB Media Request - Cultural Skills Framework [UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

s. 9(2)(g)(i)



UNCLASSIFIED

From: s. 9(2)(g)(i)
Sent: Friday, 20 February 2026 6:52 pm
To: s. 9(2)(a) ; King, Rose, MAJGEN; s. 9(2)(a) ; Motley, Grant, BRIG; Sellwood, John, CAPT RNZN; Vale, Tony; Mason, Alex; Preece, Dewi; Williams, David
Subject: Re: NZ Herald - FYI unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]

Ack. We will go back with:

The policy has been paused to enable broader consultation.

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From: s. 9(2)(a)
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2026 6:44:10 PM
To: s. 9(2)(a), s. 9(2)(g)(i) ; King, Rose, MAJGEN s. 9(2)(a) ; Motley, Grant, BRIG s. 9(2)(a) ; Sellwood, John, CAPT RNZN s. 9(2)(a) ; Vale, Tony <TONY.VALE@nzdf.mil.nz>; Mason, Alex <Alexandra.Mason@nzdf.mil.nz>; Preece, Dewi <Dewi.Preece@nzdf.mil.nz>; Williams, David <David.Williams@nzdf.mil.nz>
Subject: Re: NZ Herald - FYI unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]

Thanks s. 9(2)(g)(i) no issues with the correction.

Sorry for the delay

Kind regards

s. 9(2)(a)

From: s. 9(2)(a), s. 9(2)(g)(i)
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2026 18:40
To: King, Rose, MAJGEN s. 9(2)(a) ; Motley, Grant, BRIG s. 9(2)(a) ; Sellwood, John, CAPT RNZN s. 9(2)(a) ; Vale, Tony <TONY.VALE@nzdf.mil.nz>; Mason, Alex <Alexandra.Mason@nzdf.mil.nz>; Preece, Dewi <Dewi.Preece@nzdf.mil.nz>; Williams, David <David.Williams@nzdf.mil.nz>
Subject: Re: NZ Herald - FYI unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]

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The Office has now asked that this response not go yet.

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From: s. 9(2)(a), s. 9(2)(g)(i) [redacted]
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2026 6:35:42 PM
To: King, Rose, MAJGEN s. 9(2)(a) [redacted]; Motley, Grant, BRIG s. 9(2)(a) [redacted]; Sellwood, John, CAPT RNZN s. 9(2)(a) [redacted]; Vale, Tony <TONY.VALE@nzdf.mil.nz>; Mason, Alex <Alexandra.Mason@nzdf.mil.nz>; Preece, Dewi <Dewi.Preece@nzdf.mil.nz>; Williams, David <David.Williams@nzdf.mil.nz>
Subject: Re: NZ Herald - FYI unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]

Ack thanks. We will go with that then.

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From: King, Rose, MAJGEN s. 9(2)(a) [redacted]
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2026 6:28:04 PM
To: s. 9(2)(a), s. 9(2)(g)(i) [redacted]; s. 9(2)(a) [redacted]; Motley, Grant, BRIG s. 9(2)(a) [redacted]; Sellwood, John, CAPT RNZN s. 9(2)(a) [redacted]; Vale, Tony <TONY.VALE@nzdf.mil.nz>; Mason, Alex <Alexandra.Mason@nzdf.mil.nz>; Preece, Dewi <Dewi.Preece@nzdf.mil.nz>; Williams, David <David.Williams@nzdf.mil.nz>
Subject: Re: NZ Herald - FYI unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]

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s. 9(2)(a) is correct in that the policy is no longer live. So I support this.

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From: s. 9(2)(a), s. 9(2)(g)(i) [redacted]
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2026 6:16:52 PM
To: s. 9(2)(a) [redacted]; Motley, Grant, BRIG s. 9(2)(a) [redacted]; Sellwood, John, CAPT RNZN s. 9(2)(a) [redacted]; Vale, Tony <TONY.VALE@nzdf.mil.nz>; Mason, Alex <Alexandra.Mason@nzdf.mil.nz>; Preece, Dewi <Dewi.Preece@nzdf.mil.nz>; Williams, David <David.Williams@nzdf.mil.nz>; King, Rose, MAJGEN s. 9(2)(a) [redacted]
Subject: Re: NZ Herald - FYI unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]

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I'm fine with this if CA is.

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From: s. 9(2)(a) [redacted]
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2026 6:10:03 PM
To: s. 9(2)(a), s. 9(2)(g)(i) [redacted]; s. 9(2)(a) [redacted]

s. 9(2)(a); Motley, Grant, BRIG s. 9(2)(a); Sellwood, John, CAPT RNZN s. 9(2)(a); Vale, Tony <TONY.VALE@nzdf.mil.nz>; Mason, Alex <Alexandra.Mason@nzdf.mil.nz>; Preece, Dewi <Dewi.Preece@nzdf.mil.nz>; Williams, David <David.Williams@nzdf.mil.nz>; King, Rose, MAJGEN s. 9(2)(a)
Subject: RE: NZ Herald - FYI unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi s. 9(2)(g) responding to a smaller group at this time.

The response issued at 1633 is not accurate at this time.

Part 1 of the Army General Order – Personnel, which contains the full bi-cultural policy, has now been removed from the internal Defence intranet. This reflects that the *entire* policy is paused while Army works through further consultation. s. 9(2)(g)(i)

We may need to correct the earlier line to state that *“the policy has been paused to enable broader consultation.”*

Would this be workable to Defence? If so, I will confirm with the office.

s. 9(2)(a)

From: s. 9(2)(a), s. 9(2)(g)(i)
Sent: Friday, 20 February 2026 5:14 pm
To: Erica Julian <Erica.Julian@parliament.govt.nz>; s. 9(2)(a);
; Motley, Grant, BRIG s. 9(2)(a); Sellwood, John, CAPT RNZN s. 9(2)(a);
; Vale, Tony <TONY.VALE@nzdf.mil.nz>; Mason, Alex <Alexandra.Mason@nzdf.mil.nz>; Preece, Dewi <Dewi.Preece@nzdf.mil.nz>; Dalgleish, Samantha <Samantha.Dalgleish@nzdf.mil.nz>; Williams, David <David.Williams@nzdf.mil.nz>; Eden, Sue <Susan.Eden@nzdf.mil.nz>; Hall, Tracy <Tracy.Hall@nzdf.mil.nz>; s. 9(2)(a)
Subject: Fw: NZ Herald - FYI unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]

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Proposed response to Fisher:

The NZDF has nothing further to add.

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From: Williams, David <David.Williams@nzdf.mil.nz>
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2026 4:47 PM

To: @Media <Media@nzdf.mil.nz>
Subject: Fw: NZ Herald - FYI unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]

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From: David Fisher <David.Fisher@nzme.co.nz>
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2026 4:44:37 PM
To: Williams, David <David.Williams@nzdf.mil.nz>
Subject: Re: NZ Herald - FYI unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]

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So the bicultural policy is still a live thing then? And is it only the framework that is on pause?

Winston Peters and David Seymour are of the understanding the whole policy is paused. Judith Collins says - as does NZDF in this statement - that the framework is paused.

I've got the documentation around this. The "framework" is only part of the policy. I'm not sure everyone is talking about the same thing as the issues Mr Peters and Mr Seymour have gone beyond the "framework", and - according to them - so do the Minister's issues.

From: Williams, David <David.Williams@nzdf.mil.nz>
Sent: Friday, 20 February 2026 4:33 pm
To: David Fisher <David.Fisher@nzme.co.nz>
Subject: FW: NZ Herald - FYI unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Kia ora David,

The Army's cultural skills framework has been paused to enable broader consultation. The framework was contained within the Army bicultural policy. The Army agrees the framework needs further consideration.

This may be attributed to an NZDF spokesperson if required.

Ngā mihi

Dave Williams

Senior Communications Advisor - Defence Public Affairs

Te Ope Kātua o Aotearoa | New Zealand Defence Force

Mobile: 021 925 745

www.nzdf.mil.nz



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From: David Fisher <David.Fisher@nzme.co.nz>

Sent: Friday, 20 February 2026 1:11 pm

To: @Media <Media@nzdf.mil.nz>

Subject: NZ Herald - FYI

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Hi there,

Letting you know I'm writing a piece on the Ngāti Tūmatauenga Policy, of which I have a copy. I've sent the questions below to the Minister.

NZDF may wish to comment.

I will be reporting that it is unclear whether the whole policy is now on hold. NZDF may wish to clarify that.

I'll be filing about 4pm.

Thanks,

David Fisher

NZ Herald

021347154

From: David Fisher <David.Fisher@nzme.co.nz>

Sent: Friday, 20 February 2026 12:41 pm

To: Sharon Lundy <sharon.lundy@parliament.govt.nz>

Subject: NZ Herald - questions for the Minister

Hi Sharon,

I see ZB had a story about elements of the Army's new doctrine this morning. I'm doing a piece that covers the entire approach and was keen to hear from the Minister on this ahead of filing this afternoon.

I'd like to hear back by 4pm thanks.

The Minister may be up for an interview but if not the issues I want to resolve include:

Whether she was consulted (of if not would expect to have been) ahead of the Ngāti Tūmatauenga Policy being included in Army general orders on January 28?

If she has - as I have had reported to me - had "stern words" with the Chief of Army about the direction of the policy? And what has she said to the CDF on this?

If implementation is continuing as planned or has been slowed or effectively put on hold, and who has made the decisions around this?

Does the Minister agree with the kaupapa as it is expressed, that identity-based cohesion strengthens trust across the whole force and makes it resistant to psychological warfare and similar external pressures? And if not, what direction does she consider appropriate?

Does the Minister consider the shift of time, attention, and organisational effort could take from or contribute to readiness, retention, or operational output?

What are the Minister's thoughts around the framing of Māori cosmology in the policy and its intent to shape military decision-making, behaviour, and operational ethos?

David Fisher
NZ Herald
021347154

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Sent: Friday, 20 February 2026 6:52 pm
To: s. 9(2)(a) ; King, Rose, MAJGEN; s. 9(2)(a) ; Motley, Grant, BRIG; Sellwood, John, CAPT RNZN; Vale, Tony; Mason, Alex; Preece, Dewi; Williams, David
Subject: Re: NZ Herald - FYI unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Ack. We will go back with:

The policy has been paused to enable broader consultation.

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From: s. 9(2)(a)
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Sorry for the delay

Kind regards

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UNCLASSIFIED

The Office has now asked that this response not go yet.

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Sent: Friday, February 20, 2026 6:35:42 PM
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UNCLASSIFIED

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Sent: Friday, February 20, 2026 6:10:03 PM
To: s. 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED] ; s. 9(2)(a) [REDACTED] ; Motley, Grant, BRIG ; Sellwood, John, CAPT RNZN ; Vale, Tony ; Mason, Alex ; Preece, Dewi ; Williams, David ; King, Rose, MAJGEN
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Subject: Fw: NZ Herald - FYI unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]

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Proposed response to Fisher:

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To: @Media <Media@nzdf.mil.nz>

Subject: Fw: NZ Herald - FYI unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]

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To: Williams, David <David.Williams@nzdf.mil.nz>

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Ngā mihi

Dave Williams

Senior Communications Advisor - Defence Public Affairs

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Mobile: 021 925 745

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Letting you know I'm writing a piece on the Ngāti Tūmatauenga Policy, of which I have a copy. I've sent the questions below to the Minister.

NZDF may wish to comment.

I will be reporting that it is unclear whether the whole policy is now on hold. NZDF may wish to clarify that.

I'll be filing about 4pm.

Thanks,

David Fisher

NZ Herald

021347154

From: David Fisher <David.Fisher@nzme.co.nz>

Sent: Friday, 20 February 2026 12:41 pm

To: Sharon Lundy <sharon.lundy@parliament.govt.nz>

Subject: NZ Herald - questions for the Minister

Hi Sharon,

I see ZB had a story about elements of the Army's new doctrine this morning. I'm doing a piece that covers the entire approach and was keen to hear from the Minister on this ahead of filing this afternoon.

I'd like to hear back by 4pm thanks.

The Minister may be up for an interview but if not the issues I want to resolve include:

Whether she was consulted (of if not would expect to have been) ahead of the Ngāti Tūmatauenga Policy being included in Army general orders on January 28?

If she has - as I have had reported to me - had "stern words" with the Chief of Army about the direction of the policy? And what has she said to the CDF on this?

If implementation is continuing as planned or has been slowed or effectively put on hold, and who has made the decisions around this?

Does the Minister agree with the kaupapa as it is expressed, that identity-based cohesion strengthens trust across the whole force and makes it resistant to psychological warfare and similar external pressures? And if not, what direction does she consider appropriate?

Does the Minister consider the shift of time, attention, and organisational effort could take from or contribute to readiness, retention, or operational output?

What are the Minister's thoughts around the framing of Māori cosmology in the policy and its intent to shape military decision-making, behaviour, and operational ethos?

David Fisher

NZ Herald

021347154

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From: s. 9(2)(g)(i)
Sent: Friday, 20 February 2026 2:59 pm
To: King, Rose, MAJGEN
Cc: Preece, Dewi; Sellwood, John, CAPT RNZN
Subject: RE: NZ Herald - FYI [UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Modified response below, extra input from CA.


UNCLASSIFIED

From: s. 9(2)(g)(i)
Sent: Friday, 20 February 2026 1:55 pm
To: King, Rose, MAJGEN
Cc: Preece, Dewi ; Sellwood, John, CAPT RNZN
Subject: FW: NZ Herald - FYI

Rose, see below question to NZDF from Fisher and below that, questions to the office from Fisher.

In terms of our response to the specific question put to us, I suggest we may want to say the following which is based on what we said yesterday:

s. 9(2)(g)(i)



From: David Fisher
Sent: Friday, 20 February 2026 1:11 pm
To: @Media
Subject: NZ Herald - FYI

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NZDF may wish to comment.

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I'll be filing about 4pm.

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David Fisher
NZ Herald
021347154

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David Fisher
NZ Herald
021347154


From: s. 9(2)(g)(i)
Sent: Thursday, 19 February 2026 12:07 pm
To: s. 9(2)(a); King, Rose, MAJGEN; Motley, Grant, BRIG
Cc: s. 9(2)(a); Sellwood, John, CAPT RNZN
Subject: RE: Cultural framework letters and lines unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]

Two things. See below, correction to day, and the other is the bicultural policy is still extant, it's the cultural framework that's been paused.

From: s. 9(2)(a)
Sent: Thursday, 19 February 2026 12:01 pm
To: s. 9(2)(a), s. 9(2)(g)(i); King, Rose, MAJGEN s. 9(2)(a); Motley, Grant, BRIG s. 9(2)(a)
Cc: s. 9(2)(a); Sellwood, John, CAPT RNZN s. 9(2)(a)
Subject: RE: Cultural framework letters and lines unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi everyone – updated lines being used are below:

s. 9(2)(g)(i)



From: s. 9(2)(a), s. 9(2)(g)(i)
Sent: Thursday, 19 February 2026 10:56 am
To: s. 9(2)(a); King, Rose, MAJGEN s. 9(2)(a); Motley, Grant, BRIG s. 9(2)(a)
Cc: s. 9(2)(a); Sellwood, John, CAPT RNZN s. 9(2)(a)
Subject: RE: Cultural framework letters and lines unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

See factual changes in red. The framework is a part of the policy -- which remains extant. The framework is the thing that is being removed.

UNCLASSIFIED

From: s. 9(2)(a)
Sent: Thursday, 19 February 2026 10:44 am
To: King, Rose, MAJGEN s. 9(2)(a); Motley, Grant, BRIG s. 9(2)(a); s. 9(2)(g)(i)

s. 9(2)(g)(i)

Cc: s. 9(2)(a)

Subject: Cultural framework letters and lines

Good morning – for your awareness, we have been asked for lines from PMO on the cultural framework.

We have derived the following and passed them through – they align with the letter response.

For your awareness.

s. 9(2)(a)

Below are some proposed media lines:

s. 9(2)(g)(i)

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From: s. 9(2)(g)(i)
Sent: Friday, 20 February 2026 8:13 am
To: King, Rose, MAJGEN; Motley, Grant, BRIG; Sellwood, John, CAPT RNZN; Davies, Tony, AM; Williams, Mathew, RADM
Cc: s. 9(2)(a)
Subject: FW: ZB story

Fyi, ZB story below, which is reproduced on the Herald website.

Minister also did an interview with Hosking this morning.

s. 9(2)(g)(i)

Chief Advisor Public Affairs – Office of Chief of Defence Force HQ NZDF
Te Ope Kātua o Aotearoa | New Zealand Defence Force

s. 9(2)(a)

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Cultural skills framework for Army personnel paused after leadership concerns raised

- [NEWS](#)
- [NATIONAL](#)

Author

[Troy Match](#)

Publish Date

Fri, 20 Feb 2026, 5:00pm

The implementation of a cultural skills framework for Army personnel has been paused after concerns were raised with the Defence Minister about potential requirements for leaders to know waiata and karakia off by heart.

ACT MP Todd Stephenson wrote to Defence Minister Judith Collins after being sent a copy of the framework, saying it appeared to go beyond normal expectations of the Public Service.

The document outlines cultural practices like staff performing karakia, reciting pepeha and learning a minimum of two waiata under headings “minimal” and “must do”.

“This policy appeared to embed ideological and cultural requirements that go well beyond the Government’s expectations for a professional, politically neutral public service. Rather than focusing on operational effectiveness and merit, the framework imposes a set of cultural competencies that would not normally be expected of public servants,” Stephenson said in his letter.

Defence Minister Judith Collins replied that she hadn’t been made aware of the framework by NZDF.

“I have today sought further information from Army leadership. I am advised that the implementation of this Framework has been paused to enable broader consultation. The Army leadership agrees that this policy needs further consideration.”

Stephenson said he was pleased the framework had been paused.

“A number of people came to Act and said ‘this has been rolled out and can you look into it’,” he said.

“I think this Government’s been pretty clear that we actually want the Public Service, including the Defence Force, to focus on their core roles and responsibilities.”

“In this case, that would be making sure the army is a world-class and combat ready force, that’s modern, agile and highly adaptive,” he said.

When asked whether the pause was initiated by her, Collins said: “No, I understand that the Army decided to pause after I contacted them and said I had not heard about this new framework from them.”

In a statement, an NZDF spokesperson said: “The Army’s cultural skills framework was paused on Wednesday by the Chief of Army to enable broader consultation, after the Minister of Defence became aware of it. The Army agrees the framework needs further consideration.”

When asked what she thought about the framework Stephenson had sent her, Collins said it was unclear, and she certainly wasn’t happy with some of the language used.

“It was certainly written in a must-do rather than an optional or it would be good to. And I think they’ve got to go back to think about it a bit more. But their main job is to be a fighting fit army. I want them focused on being a fighting fit army,” she said.

Troy Matich is a political reporter with Newstalk ZB, working from Parliament’s press gallery. She joined NZME in 2025, previously working for RNZ as a producer for Morning Report.

From: King, Rose, MAJGEN
Sent: Thursday, 19 February 2026 7:56 pm
To: Gibbons, Hamish, BRIG
Subject: Re: PART 1 - Ngāti Tūmatauenga proposed amendments [UNCLASSIFIED]

Thanks Hamish. - I'll try to come in earlier tomorrow and update you.

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From: Gibbons, Hamish, BRIG
Sent: Thursday, February 19, 2026 5:45:37 PM
To: King, Rose, MAJGEN
Subject: Fw: PART 1 - Ngāti Tūmatauenga proposed amendments [UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Ma'am,

This might open, but otherwise I will be in around 7am tomorrow and can bring you the hard copy when ready.

Kind regards,

Hamish Gibbons
Brigadier
Deputy Chief of Army

s. 9(2)(a)

UNCLASSIFIED

From: Michie, Roz, LTCOL
Sent: Thursday, February 19, 2026 2:28:51 PM
To: Gibbons, Hamish, BRIG ; Deputy Chief of Army
Cc: Cranston, Laura, LTCOL
Subject: PART 1 - Ngāti Tūmatauenga proposed amendments [UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Kia Ora Sir,
Attached is the link to our working document for PART 1 - Ngāti Tūmatauenga. I recommend reading it with Simple Mark Up applied. Laura are writing a cover memo and flagged document for CA's review. We will need to be aware of any additional changes you make to the document to ensure the covering memo is up to date.

[Wago-p Part 1 Ver1.1.docx](#)

Roz

LTCOL Roz Michie, BA, GDip(Ed), MM(PM), psc (j), MSS
Acting Assistant Chief of Army Operations (A/G3), Army General Staff
New Zealand Army | Ngāti Tūmatauenga

s. 9(2)(a)

s. 9(2)(a)

www.nzdf.mil.nz



UNCLASSIFIED

From: King, Rose, MAJGEN
Sent: Thursday, 19 February 2026 2:48 pm
To: s. 9(2)(g)(i)
Subject: Re: Response to Newstalk ZB unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]

Thanks

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From: s. 9(2)(g)(i)
Sent: Thursday, February 19, 2026 2:20:55 PM
To: King, Rose, MAJGEN
Subject: FW: Response to Newstalk ZB unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Fyi CA, signed off by the office.

UNCLASSIFIED

From: s. 9(2)(a)
Sent: Thursday, 19 February 2026 2:06 pm
To: s. 9(2)(g)(i) ; s. 9(2)(a) ; Motley, Grant, BRIG ; Sellwood, John, CAPT RNZN ; s. 9(2)(a) ; Vale, Tony ; Dalgleish, Samantha ; Williams, David ; Eden, Sue ; Hall, Tracy ; Preece, Dewi ; Mason, Alex ; s. 9(2)(a)
Subject: RE: Response to Newstalk ZB unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]
Thanks s. 9(2)(g)

From: s. 9(2)(g)(i)
Sent: Thursday, 19 February 2026 1:18 PM
To: Erica Julian ; s. 9(2)(a) ; Motley, Grant, BRIG ; Sellwood, John, CAPT RNZN ; s. 9(2)(a) ; Vale, Tony ; Dalgleish, Samantha ; Williams, David ; Eden, Sue ; Hall, Tracy ; Preece, Dewi ; Mason, Alex ; s. 9(2)(a)
Subject: Response to Newstalk ZB unclassified [UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Going to Newstalk ZB.

From an NZDF spokesperson:

The Army's cultural skills framework was paused yesterday by the Chief of Army to enable broader consultation, after the Minister of Defence became aware of it. The screenshot you have attached is accurate. The Army agrees the framework needs further consideration.

UNCLASSIFIED

From: Troy Matich <troy.matich@nzme.co.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 19 February 2026 10:37 am
To: @Media <Media@nzdf.mil.nz>
Subject: Newstalk ZB Media Request - Cultural Skills Framework

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Kia ora,

Troy Matich here, I'm a Political Reporter for Newstalk ZB. 😊

I understand the Defence Minister and NZDF leadership agreed yesterday to pause the roll out of a Cultural Skills Framework.

Can I please have the NZDF's confirmation that this has been paused — as well as a brief explanation of where the implementation process was before it was paused. Were staff/members of the Defence Force aware of the framework or was it still only being discussed with leadership?

And was the framework shared with the Minister before yesterday?

I have attached a copy of the framework I've received, just checking this is accurate please?

I have a really tight deadline for this, around 12pm today if I could get a response before then that would be really great. Please let me know if that's not possible.

Ngā mihi,

TROY MATICH

Political Reporter | Newstalk ZB

M: 021 753 806

E: troy.matich@nzme.co.nz

ME: My pronouns are she/her

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From: King, Rose, MAJGEN
Sent: Thursday, 19 February 2026 1:19 pm
To: Davies, Tony, AM
Subject: TP's

Tēnā koe Sir,

My suggested TP's:

- NZDF is fully committed to delivering our operational outputs
- -(In last two weeks Army delivered the Future Fighting Conf, Amry 4 year plan and is about to deliver CA's directive)
- The policy is not a new direction of travel, but codifying what has already been occurring outlining our protocols on the marae, for funerals and history of our marae
- Within the policy document it explicitly states the competences framework was aspirational and NOT aligned to promotion requirements, however we have paused the competency framework to remove any misunderstanding
- There is NO suggestion that cultural skills framework should take precedence or priority over military capabilities
- Army/NZDF has been clear that we are about operational outputs
- The policy strengthens identity and cohesion which underpins our ability to fight to win - it is part of who we are

For you Sir, I can confirm the competency framework is off line. We will strengthen language around intent to broadening understanding, and not a requirement for all to be proficient or change their view on te ao Māori. And as you mentioned Sir, this is a strength we have and has been part of the proud operational history of our Army including the likes of 28 Māori Bn, this point of difference enables access particularly in the SWP.

Per ardua,

Rose

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From: King, Rose, MAJGEN
Sent: Thursday, 19 February 2026 12:50 pm
To: s. 9(2)(g)(i)
Subject: RE: Newstalk ZB Media Request - Cultural Skills Framework [UNCLASSIFIED]

Thanks s. 9(2)(g)(i) happy, although curious if we use NZDF or CA?

From: s. 9(2)(g)(i)
Sent: Thursday, 19 February 2026 12:45 pm
To: King, Rose, MAJGEN ; Sellwood, John, CAPT RNZN
Cc: Motley, Grant, BRIG ; Preece, Dewi ; s. 9(2)(a) ; Preece, Dewi
Subject: RE: Newstalk ZB Media Request - Cultural Skills Framework [UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Further to this, the office has asked that we respond to ZB. See draft response below, for approval from CA and any further input from anyone else appreciated.

From an NZDF spokesperson:

The NZDF confirms the cultural skills framework was paused yesterday by NZDF leadership to enable broader consultation, after the Minister of Defence became aware of it. The screenshot you have attached is accurate. The Army agrees that this framework needs further consideration. The NZDF has no further comment to make.

UNCLASSIFIED

From: s. 9(2)(g)(i)
Sent: Thursday, 19 February 2026 10:40 am
To: King, Rose, MAJGEN ; Sellwood, John, CAPT RNZN
Cc: Motley, Grant, BRIG ; Preece, Dewi ; s. 9(2)(a)
Subject: FW: Newstalk ZB Media Request - Cultural Skills Framework

Fysa

s. 9(2)(g)(i)
Chief Advisor Public Affairs – Office of Chief of Defence Force HQ NZDF
Te Ope Kātua o Aotearoa | New Zealand Defence Force
s. 9(2)(a)

www.nzdf.mil.nz



From: Troy Matich
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Political Reporter | Newstalk ZB

M: 021 753 806

E: troy.matich@nzme.co.nz

ME: My pronouns are she/her



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From: s. 9(2)(g)(i)
Sent: Wednesday, 18 February 2026 6:30 pm
To: Ministerial Services
Cc: Sellwood, John, CAPT RNZN; Motley, Grant, BRIG
Subject: Fw: Todd Stephenson response sent
Attachments: Todd stephenson 18022026.docx

FYI

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From: s. 9(2)(a)
Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2026 5:43:47 PM
To: King, Rose, MAJGEN s. 9(2)(a); s. 9(2)(a), s. 9(2)(g)(i); Motley, Grant, BRIG s. 9(2)(a)
Cc: s. 9(2)(a)
Subject: Todd Stephenson response sent

Good afternoon everyone –

Please find attached the letter sent from Minister Collins to Todd Stephenson for your records.

Kind regards

s. 9(2)(a)

From: s. 9(2)(a)
Sent: Wednesday, 18 February 2026 5:31 pm
To: s. 9(2)(a)
Subject: Todd Stephenson response sent



s. 9(2)(a)
Senior Ministerial Advisor | Office of Hon Judith Collins KC MP

Member of Parliament for Papakura
Attorney-General | Minister of Defence | Minister for Digitising Government | Minister for the Public Service
| Minister Responsible for the GCSB | Minister Responsible for the NZSIS | Minister for Space

s. 9(2)(a)

Email: s. 9(2)(a) Website: www.Beehive.govt.nz
Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

Hon Judith Collins KC

Attorney General
Minister of Defence
Minister for Digitising Government
Minister for the Public Service
Minister Responsible for the GCSB
Minister Responsible for the NZSIS
Minister for Space



Todd Stephenson MP
Todd.Stephenson@parliament.govt.nz

JC-COR-DF-141

Dear Todd,

Thank you for your correspondence of 10 February 2026 raising concerns over the New Zealand Army's Bicultural Policy and Cultural Skills Framework. I apologise for not replying sooner due to being overseas.

This Framework was not previously brought to my attention, and I have today sought further information from Army leadership. I am advised that the implementation of this Framework has been paused to enable broader consultation. The Army leadership agrees that this policy needs further consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judith Collins".

Hon Judith Collins KC
Minister of Defence

From: Michie, Roz, LTCOL
Sent: Saturday, 14 February 2026 7:18 pm
To: King, Rose, MAJGEN; Gibbons, Hamish, BRIG; Chief of Army; Deputy Chief of Army
Cc: Cranston, Laura, LTCOL
Subject: Re: JC-COR-DF-141 Letter to MINDEF - Ngati Tumatauenga Bicultural Policy [SENSITIVE]

SENSITIVE

Understood, Ma'am, thank you.

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SENSITIVE

From: King, Rose, MAJGEN
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2026 4:09 PM
To: Michie, Roz, LTCOL ; Gibbons, Hamish, BRIG ; Chief of Army ; Deputy Chief of Army
Cc: Cranston, Laura, LTCOL
Subject: RE: JC-COR-DF-141 Letter to MINDEF - Ngāti Tūmatauenga Bicultural Policy [SENSITIVE]

SENSITIVE

Thanks Roz, I had not seen the letter and look forward to the recommended response. For me this needs to cover off that this is about operational competency and the strength our culture brings, The Treaty is a founding document and leverage the additional strength the Māori culture brings has almost always been part of the Army's strength (many historical examples) that bicultural policy enables multicultural and it aligns with our ethos and values – just off the top of my head.

SENSITIVE

From: Michie, Roz, LTCOL
Sent: Friday, 13 February 2026 4:02 pm
To: King, Rose, MAJGEN ; Gibbons, Hamish, BRIG ; Chief of Army ; Deputy Chief of Army
Cc: Cranston, Laura, LTCOL
Subject: JC-COR-DF-141 Letter to MINDEF - Ngāti Tūmatauenga Bicultural Policy [SENSITIVE]

SENSITIVE

Kia Ora Ma'am, Sir,

I am aware you are already tracking this letter to MINDEF (JC-COR-DF-141) regarding our Ngāti Tūmatauenga Bicultural Policy, however I wanted to make sure you both had a copy of the letter. A response is required back to Ministerial Services NLT **20 Feb**

The key points of the letter are:

- Cultural demands exceed public-service norms, pushing beyond what's appropriate for a politically neutral defence organisation.
- Tikanga, waiata, karakia, and pepeha requirements are seen as unrelated to operational merit or effectiveness.

- Leadership expectations escalate significantly, risking cultural compliance becoming a proxy for competence.
- The policy adopts a contested Treaty interpretation, not appropriate as an institutional baseline.
- Overall risk: the framework shifts focus from neutrality and operational priorities—prompting a call for urgent review.

Action being taken: LTCOL Copeland and LTCOL Cranston are currently drafting a response which will be provided for review and approval to send to Ministerial Services.

Standing by for any guidance.

Roz

LTCOL Roz Michie, BA, GDip(Ed), MM(PM), psc (j), MSS

Acting Assistant Chief of Army Operations (A/G3), Army General Staff

New Zealand Army | Ngāti Tūmatauenga

s. 9(2)(a) [redacted] |

s. 9(2)(a) [redacted] www.nzdf.mil.nz

NGĀTI TŪMATAUENGA

NZ ARMY

SENSITIVE

From: Chief of Army
Sent: Thursday, 29 January 2026 3:43 pm
To: @ARMY.ALL
Subject: Message from CA – Launch of Ngāti Tūmatauenga Policy, our bicultural policy [UNCLASSIFIED]
Attachments: A message from CA - Ngāti Tūmatauenga Policy.pdf; AGO-P Part 1 Ngāti Tūmatauenga.pdf

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Tēnā koutou katoa e te whānau o Ngāti Tūmatauenga, ngā hōia, ngā āpiha me ō tātou whānau tautoko, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa.

He honore nui tēnei ki te kōrero atu ki a koutou i tēnei wā hei Tumu Whakarae, ā, hei hoa haere anō hoki i tēnei haerenga. He mea nui kia noho kotahi tātou, kia mārama hoki ki te huarahi e anga atu nei tātou.

Greetings to you all, the whānau of Ngāti Tūmatauenga, our soldiers, our officers, and the families who support us. It is a great honour to speak with you as the Chief of Army, and also as one who walks this journey alongside you. It is important that we remain united and clear about the path we are moving forward on together.

Today I am proud to announce the release of the [Ngāti Tūmatauenga policy](#), our new bicultural framework that will strengthen the cohesion and identity, which underpin our ability to fight and win.

I urge you all to read the attached fuller message outlining the broader context for the policy and the next steps, as well as the policy itself.

Take the time to understand it and think how it may impact you on your journey as a member of Ngāti Tūmatauenga, the New Zealand Army. Please raise any questions through your Chain of Command or to the Welfare and Culture team within Army General Staff.

Our core mission remains clear: delivering land combat-capable force elements ready to fight and win. Cohesion and resilience, grounded in our shared identity as Ngāti Tūmatauenga, make that possible.

Ko tēnei kaupapa ahurea rua he pou mō tō tātou kotahitanga me tō tātou whakaute tētahi ki tētahi. Mai i tēnei rā, kia whakatinana tātou i ēnei uara i ia rā. This bicultural policy is a pillar for our unity and for the respect we show one another. From this day forward, let us live these values in our actions every day.

Tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa.

Ngā mihi,

MAJGEN Rose King
Chief of Army
Ngāti Tūmatauenga | New Zealand Army
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UNCLASSIFIED

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From: King, Rose, MAJGEN
Sent: Thursday, 29 January 2026 6:31 am
To: Michie, Roz, LTCOL
Subject: Re: Delay to release of Bicultural Policy [UNCLASSIFIED]

No need to apologise Roz. There is a lot in and as long as we achieve it before Waitangi Day which I understand is still achievable that is great.

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From: Michie, Roz, LTCOL
Sent: Wednesday, January 28, 2026 5:17:08 PM
To: King, Rose, MAJGEN ; Gibbons, Hamish, BRIG
Cc: Cranston, Laura, LTCOL ; Chief of Army ; Deputy Chief of Army
Subject: Delay to release of Bicultural Policy [UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Ma'am, Sir,

My sincere apologies, there has been a further delay to the official release of Army's Bicultural policy. I anticipate it will be released tomorrow (Thu). The requirement to have the policy released before Waitangi day is well understood and will be achieved.

Roz

LTCOL Roz Michie, BA, GDip(Ed), MM(PM), psc (j), MSS
Acting Assistant Chief of Army Operations (A/G3), Army General Staff
New Zealand Army | Ngāti Tūmatauenga

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We also have two Chaplains engaged in formal postgraduate research on the engagement and impact of bicultural Tikanga within the NZDF and Te Takahurihanga process.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review the decision on your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website, with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely

GA Motley

Brigadier

Chief of Staff HQNZDF

Enclosure:

1. Correspondence