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OIA-2026-5898

20th October 2026

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I refer to your email of 22 July 2026 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), *copies of all documents given to relevant decision makers and minutes of decisions ...relating to how the NZDF intends to address the recruitment challenges identified on page 9 of its Workforce Strategy*. I apologise for the significant delay in responding to your request. This was due in part to the requirement to retrieve and review a large number of documents spanning five years across all Services in order to determine which of those were in scope of your request.

The NZDF Workforce Strategy forms part of a strategic approach that recognises that the global environment has become increasingly unstable, with rising competition in the Pacific and that the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) must be prepared to respond at short notice – alone, or with our ally or partners. While the Military Strategy focuses outward on threats and deterrence the Organisational Strategy – combined with the Workforce Strategy¹ – focuses inward on people, capabilities, processes, and resource optimisation. Defence recruitment is one part of the broadbased Workforce Strategy and people system. The iterative development of the Workforce Strategy means that there is no single decision document focussed solely on recruiting that fits within the scope of your request.

The Strategic Workforce Programme (recently changed to Plan Tangata), with its own governance board, focuses on a broad range of initiatives under the Workforce Strategy, including recruitment system modernisation, long-term retention strategies, induction reform, new workforce planning tools, remuneration system reform, and other key enablers that support workforce effectiveness and delivery of the Workforce Strategy.

The Defence Recruitment team has been working to a plan of modernisation and systemic change for four years in support of improved NZDF recruitment capability. This has largely been conducted as part of the routine functions within Defence Recruiting. The Prospective Candidate Management System (PCMS) initiated changes pre-date the publication of the Workforce Strategy 2026 and spans many functional aspects of Defence Recruitment. This revised PCMS approach is complemented, informed and was aligned with the drafting of the Workforce Strategy. Enclosure one is an extract from the Strategic Workforce Programme Board minute of decision from February 2026 that deals with the PCMS delivery approach.

The Defence Recruiting Action Plan (DRAP) was developed in FY 2023/24 and has evolved in response to untenable attrition and declining recruitment since COVID-19. The DRAP was initiated with a three-phase approach to develop a foundation, build capability and capacity and transform

¹ The development of the Workforce Strategy has been an iterative process, beginning in 2019. Defence Capability Plan in 2025. Its formalisation was aligned to the Defence Capability Plan in 2025 and the Military and Organisational Strategies in 2026.

process and practice. The DRAP is a routine active and ongoing programme. Central to the DRAP was an initiative to deliver 'More People, Faster'. Three initial goals included: 90 days' time to hire, 1500 attestations annually and an improved candidate experience. Enclosure two is the approval to formalise Defence Recruiting advice to the Single Services in terms of suggesting focus areas that, would significantly enhance the ability to recruit to target as part of this initiative. Other initiatives within the DRAP are as follows:

- **Accredited Employer status.** Providing a pathway to laterally recruit suitably equipped and qualified people from overseas into NZDF military roles has been a key initiative under action as part of the DRAP. As of 11 September, the NZDF has been granted Accredited Employer status, While this was a decision of Immigration NZ the NZDF was involved in a support and advisory capacity. Regaining this pathway gives the NZDF another tool to help address critical workforce gaps.
- **Minimum Entry Requirements (MER).** MER have also been updated to ensure they are fit for purpose within the context of the contemporary recruiting system, as well as reflecting changes that have happened over time with NCEA since the original MER were established. Information on MER has been released previously on the NZDF website: https://www.nzdf.mil.nz/assets/Uploads/DocumentLibrary/OIA-2024-5138_Recruitment-and-attestation-data.pdf.
- **Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).** Pathways to broaden the recruitment base in terms of highly skilled technical personnel across engineering, aviation, cyber, intelligence, logistics and scientific disciplines. While not a decision document the recruitment campaign brief as outlines at enclosure three.
- **Diversified Recruitment Base.** Pathways to broaden recruitment of Maori, Pasifika, female candidates and defence civilian roles. The initial scoping has been conducted and campaign brief documents are at enclosures four-six.

The enclosed documents relate to the relevant and respective decisions taken to address recruiting challenges as it relates to the Workforce Strategy. As outlined, many of the initiatives identified were commenced prior to the Workforce Strategy publication within existing Defence Recruiting work as part of the DRAP. Where indicated: personal information is withheld in accordance with section 9(2)(a) of the OIA to protect privacy; and, information provided on a basis of confidence is withheld in accordance with section 9(2)(ba)(i) of the OIA.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to 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

Enclosures:

1. Strategic Workforce Programme Board Minutes extract – February 2026
2. Assistance to Defence Recruiting to deliver more people faster - 19 November 2023
3. STEM in Defence–Campaign Brief

4. Pasifika in Defence Campaign
5. Women in Defence Campaign
6. Māori in Defence Campaign

Strategic Workforce Programme Board Minutes Excerpt: SWP-20260219-006 – Feb 26

Reboot Recruitment System Delivery Approach	<i>Prospective Candidate Management System (PCMS) Delivery Approach</i> - Chair prefaced this segment is PCMS-focused and other recruitment related topics can be discussed later. - Recruitment Lead introduced Salesforce SME, outlined the approvals sought, and provided an overview of the DHR Action Plan: - Salesforce is the PCMS tool/platform. - Defence Recruitment is delivering the DHR Action Plan, a three-phased plan around foundation, build and transformation. - Goals this will deliver on include 90 days' time to hire, a system with capacity of 1500 attestations annually, and an improved candidate experience. - PCMS is critical to providing better recruiting outcomes for stakeholders, enhanced ability to predict supply, and enhanced agility. - The phased approach proposed for PCMS delivery is a result of resourcing constraints and establishment delays, noting the SWP team has been very supportive. - DCA queried the moving of funds. Recruitment Lead confirmed the funds were being shifted to bridge multiple FYs. - DCA emphasised importance of the system and if there was sufficient project resourcing. Recruitment Lead confirmed project	Decision 61: Approved the phased approach delivery plan for the Prospective Candidate Management System (PCMS), including the request for additional resourcing. Decision 62: Approved the project to deliver phase 2 in FY26/27, including funding roll over to FY26/27, with an additional ca \$100k uplift across the project.
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	resourcing, and noted the additional resource will enable faster delivery. • JDS CoS asked for contextual figures. Recruitment Lead confirmed the current state is 185 days to hire and system capacity of 1000 attestations. • Recruitment Lead noted that the project focuses on the tech solution, and that there are prioritised lines of effort to deliver on growth ASAP and can accommodate mass mobilisation events, through the phased delivery approach. The phased delivery approach was outlined in more detail, as stated in board papers. • DCA queried the logic behind 1500 as the goal. Recruitment Lead outlined it represents equilibrium between supply and demand, and was produced under DCP. The system will deliver much more than that, notwithstanding resource constraints. • Recruitment Lead confirmed 1500 is not mass mobilisation – the system could scale at pace for 10,000. • Recruitment Lead added that Phase 1 includes enhancements to offset CIV recruiting. • The Board approved the phased approach delivery plan, including request for additional resourcing, and approved the project to deliver into FY26/27 and associated funding shift & uplift. <i>Lateral Recruitment Update</i> • Recruitment Lead gave an overview of the Lateral Recruitment workstream: • There is no VISA NZDF can use to recruit from overseas as all have work to residency component. No residency means no clearance can	
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	be granted, which impacts deployment ability. • DHR Action Plan includes policy review and plans on move to more active recruiting once visa issue is resolved. • Current resource is to be repurposed to work with MBIE on a way forward. • There has been work with the Minister in recent weeks on similar work. • DCAF commented that he had heard contradictory information from an 06/ COL(E). Recruitment Lead confirmed there is nothing stopping NZDF from becoming an accredited employer, but work to residency component remains the limiting factor. • Recruitment Lead outlined the original Lateral recruitment approach was to get on Tier 1 list of accredited employers, but current government direction seems to likely reduce green list. MBIE and our specialist will stay involved in korero on what new visa will look like that will become available from August. • JDS CoS asked about recruitment through commonwealth countries. Recruitment Lead confirmed NZDF used to recognise clearances from FVEYs, but rules have now changed so it does not transfer. • DCN queried how exchanges work. DCA responded that there is a cross-accreditation process, where FVEYs military own the risk and individual represents home country, rather than joining NZDF. • Recruitment Lead confirmed specialist resource will speed up delivery, and at least an interim solution is required before Jun 26.	
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	• CPO CoS commented he had checked a letter between Minister of Defence and Minister of Immigration requesting a straight-to-residence solution to go this week. More systemic changes will require ministerial cooperation and possibly cabinet / legislative decisions. • Chair noted the Minister's interest may help delivery go faster, and that Recruitment Lead, CPO CoS and SWP Mil Lead will have a conversation next week with key stakeholders to gauge appetite on delivery pace.	
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HEADQUARTERS NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCE**DDR MINUTE 71/2023**

19 Nov 23

D1-0075/19

IWP WG**ASSISTANCE TO DEFENCE RECRUITING TO DELIVER MORE PEOPLE FASTER****Reference**

A. Defence Recruiting Action Plan issued May 2023.

Purpose

1. The purpose of this minute is to formalise Defence Recruiting (DR) advice to the Single Services in terms of suggesting focus areas that, if implemented will significantly enhance DR's ability to recruit to target.

Background

2. As a result of the direction resulting from May EXCO, DR has implemented a comprehensive plan of action IAW ref A, which centres on four pillars: improving pipeline efficiencies, restoring order, improving governance and accountability across DR, and re-establishing relationships. This minute intends to complement that plan and further enhance the good work already undertaken in partnership with the single services. It follows on from the formal DR request for support via various means this financial year.

3. In considering which initiatives to prioritise, it should be noted that DR holds responsibility and accountability for pipeline management, attraction and the bulk of the processes used during recruitment; as such, DR has a complete understanding of and continues to monitor the percentages of candidates failing to progress through the recruitment process. Further, DR has a full understanding of the reasons why and prioritises workflow accordingly. The single services and portfolio leads have responsibility for entry-level standards, conditions of service and the mechanisms required to make the identified focus areas in annex A successful.

Discussion

4. The enterprise's ability to move risk along the candidate journey and, therefore, increase candidate numbers is limited by resources, infrastructure and, in most instances, a lack of review post the establishment of DR in the current construct. Annex A details areas of focus that the single services could undertake IOT directly influence DR's ability to meet targets on their behalf. While not prescriptive, the focus areas cover the following:

- a. known barriers for candidates which can be addressed,
- b. inefficiencies in single service support provision creating undue pressure on DR staff,
- c. infrastructure and resource development opportunities, and
- d. ideas and initiatives already in place across the FVEY community.

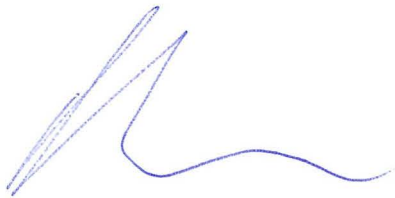
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5. It should be noted that full review and consultation across all stakeholders must be undertaken as process, policy and decision-making authorities are not always identified. DR is currently drafting the inaugural Defence Manual of Recruiting policy. It should also be noted that DR has limited ability to absorb bespoke solutions and requests that the integrity of the selection process is respected at all times (e.g. should a single service lower an entry-level standard as an outcome of any review in isolation and it presents an easier pathway against the other two services it would create untenable processing difficulties for DR).
6. While annex A contains comments on holistic considerations, risk and mitigation annex A is intended to serve as a potential predictor of impact only to prioritise effort. It is not considered an exhaustive list.

Recommendations

7. In light of the above it is requested that IWPWG:
- a. **direct** single services and portfolios to consider the initiatives contained in annex A when prioritising effort to support increased recruitment numbers, and
 - b. **Note** that having all parts of the organisation working on the same initiatives will improve NZDF's ability to meet recruiting targets.



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Annex

- A. MORE PEOPLE FASTER - Recommendation for Single Service/Portfolio Lead focus

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STEM in Defence – Campaign Brief draft

Problem Statement

The New Zealand Defence Force relies on highly skilled technical personnel across engineering, aviation, cyber, intelligence, logistics and scientific disciplines to maintain operational capability. However, awareness and understanding of NZDF as a STEM career pathway remains limited.

At present, STEM recruitment is challenged by:

- low awareness of technical roles within Defence
- strong association of Defence with combat-focused careers
- lack of clarity between Military and Civilian pathways
- misalignment between audience expectations and role requirements

Ipsos research shows that young people continue to associate Defence careers with physical risk, combat exposure, and demanding environments, which can deter technically capable candidates. In addition, the current approach risks conflating two fundamentally different recruitment challenges:

- attracting individuals to learn and build STEM skills (Military)
- attracting individuals to apply existing STEM expertise (Civilian)

Strategic Context – Military vs Civilian STEM

There are two distinct STEM recruitment challenges within NZDF, each requiring a different strategic approach.

Military STEM

- Focus: Building future capability
- Audience: 18–24
- Entry: Entry-level, trainable candidates
- Proposition: Learn a trade and develop STEM skills
- Campaign platform: Join A Team You Can Count On (TYCCO)

Civilian STEM

- Focus: Accessing existing expertise
- Audience: 25–34+ (typically)
- Entry: Qualified professionals
- Proposition: Apply an existing career within Defence

- Campaign platform: Employer brand + role-based recruitment

Dimension	Military STEM	Civilian STEM
Target Audience	18–24	25–34+
Candidate Profile	School leavers / early tertiary	Qualified professionals
Experience Required	Entry-level	Postgraduate / industry experience
Proposition	Learn and build a STEM career	Apply an existing STEM career
Role Volume	Many roles annually	Limited, specialised roles
Recruitment Approach	Awareness-led	Targeted recruitment
Entry Pathway	Careers site → selection	Job ad → civilian portal
Training Model	NZDF provides training	Candidate already qualified
Environment	Operational, applied	Research, lab-based
Campaign Platform	TYCCO	Employer brand
Primary Challenge	Awareness and perception	Limited talent pool

Implication

Military and Civilian STEM recruitment should not be combined within a single campaign approach, as doing so risks confusion and reduced effectiveness.

Each requires:

- different messaging
- different channels
- different audiences
- different success measures

MILITARY STEM – CAMPAIGN BRIEF

Objective

Increase awareness and consideration of NZDF as a viable pathway for STEM careers among young New Zealanders aged 18–24.

Audience

Young New Zealanders aged 18–24 who are:

- exploring career pathways
- interested in STEM or problem-solving
- open to learning and development

Key Insight

This audience is not looking to apply existing qualifications, but to:

- start a career
- learn skills
- gain experience

What We've Learned (Ipsos Insights)

Young New Zealanders are motivated by careers that offer purpose, development, and access to modern technology; however, they do not currently associate these attributes with Defence careers. This creates an opportunity to reposition NZDF as a place where STEM skills are learned and applied in meaningful, real-world environments.

Career Motivations for Young New Zealanders

Ipsos research shows that young people value careers that offer:

- Stable employment
- Competitive pay
- A sense of purpose and making a difference
- Career development opportunities
- Access to modern technology and innovative work environments

Young people value:

- stable employment
- career development
- purpose and impact
- working with modern technology

Exposure to TYCCO is improving understanding of what military life in Defence is like, indicating a strong platform to build from.

Key Barriers

- Defence perceived as combat-focused
- Limited visibility of STEM roles
- Misunderstanding of entry pathways
- Assumption experience is required

Strategic Opportunity

Reposition NZDF as a place where young people can:

- learn STEM skills from the ground up
- apply those skills in real-world environments
- contribute to meaningful outcomes

Strategy

Extend the Join A Team You Can Count On (TYCCO) platform by highlighting the technical capability behind the team.

Position NZDF as a place where:

- STEM skills are learned
- skills are applied in real environments
- work contributes to national capability

Creative Direction

Show:

- technology in action
- real operational environments
- hands-on problem solving
- team-based work

Funnel

Awareness

STEM-led storytelling within TYCCO

Interest

Explain pathways and training

Desire

Highlight development and outcomes

Action

Drive to Defence Careers

Why It Matters

Future defence capability depends on attracting and developing technically skilled personnel.

CIVILIAN STEM – EMPLOYER BRAND CONSIDERATION

Civilian STEM recruitment represents a different challenge and should be addressed through a dedicated employer brand approach.

Key Focus Areas

- Strengthen NZDF civilian employer brand
- Improve visibility on platforms such as SEEK
- Enhance civilian careers portal experience
- Develop targeted, role-specific recruitment

Challenge

The issue is not awareness but attracting the right qualified candidates into a limited number of specialised roles.

Recommendation

Proceed with:

1. Military STEM Campaign

- o Awareness-led
- o Built on TYCCO
- o Focused on 18–24

2. Civilian STEM Strategy (separate workstream)

- o Employer brand-led
- o Targeted recruitment
- o Focused on qualified talent

1. Confirm Strategic Direction

- o Align on separation of Military and Civilian STEM approaches
- o Confirm Military STEM as an awareness-led campaign under TYCCO

2. Define Priority Roles and Requirements

- o Identify key Military STEM trades and officer roles with workforce demand
- o Confirm intake timing and recruitment priorities with workforce planning

3. Develop Creative Direction

- o Brief agency on Military STEM positioning within the TYCCO platform
- o Develop concepts that highlight technology, problem-solving, and real-world application

4. Validate Approach Across Stakeholders

- o Align with Civilian Recruitment team to ensure clear separation of messaging
- o Confirm internal alignment across Marketing, Recruiting Operations, and Workforce Planning

5. Build Campaign and Content Plan

- o Develop assets across awareness, interest, and nurture stages
- o Identify key channels and content formats aligned to the 18–24 audience

Pasifika in Defence – “Family You Can Count On” Marketing Campaign

Problem Statement

While the Join a Team You Can Count On (TYCCO) campaign has successfully highlighted teamwork, camaraderie, and belonging, it currently underrepresents the Pasifika perspective. Pasifika peoples bring powerful cultural values of service, unity, family, humility, and faith, all of which deeply align with the NZDF’s ethos, yet these connections are not clearly visible in our current creative.

Pasifika communities have long-standing relationships with the New Zealand Defence Force, with intergenerational service histories across Army, Navy, and Air Force. However, the NZDF’s own Pacific Peoples Strategy (2020–2025) identifies the need to strengthen representation, leadership visibility, and retention across all levels. To attract, inspire, and retain Pasifika talent, NZDF must authentically reflect these shared values through its storytelling, showing that Defence is not just a career, it’s an extension of āiga (family): a place where service, faith, and belonging coexist.

As one of the largest Pacific nations by population and geography, New Zealand’s Defence Force carries an obligation to reflect the people and region it represents. Increasing Pasifika visibility within the TYCCO framework aligns not only with recruitment goals but with NZDF’s strategic commitment to cultural capability, operational readiness, and inclusion.

Goal

- Strengthen inclusivity and belonging messaging for Pasifika audiences aged 18–24.
- Improve relatability and pride in cultural identity as key campaign takeaways.
- Increase awareness of the wide range of career pathways that align with Pasifika values of service, leadership, and protection.
- Reinforce NZDF as a place where Pasifika personnel can thrive while staying true to family, faith, and culture.
- Support the NZDF Pacific Peoples Strategy objectives of representation, cultural capability, and engagement.

What We’ve Learned

Representation and Retention

- As of June 2025, Pasifika make up 4.6 percent of the NZDF Regular Force, below national population representation (8.1 percent).
- Representation is strongest in Army (2.9 percent), followed by Navy (1.1 percent) and Air Force (0.6 percent).

Pasifika in Defence – “Family You Can Count On” Marketing Campaign

- Over half of Pasifika personnel (54.9 percent) are under 25 years old, highlighting strong youth potential and a need for tailored early-career pathways.
- Pasifika women are particularly underrepresented, signalling an intersectional inclusion gap.

Motivation

Pasifika candidates are highly motivated by family pride, community service, and the desire to make a meaningful contribution. Many express a sense of “giving back” or honouring the sacrifices of their parents and elders.

The most common motivators cited are:

- To make my family proud
- To serve my country and my people
- To be a role model for younger siblings and cousins

Decision Drivers

- Family and community endorsement are key influences in career decisions.
- Church leaders, youth mentors, and parents hold significant sway over application confidence.
- Campaigns that feature real Pasifika mentors and family narratives increase trust and engagement.

Values Alignment

Faith, humility, teamwork, and loyalty resonate strongly across Pasifika audiences. These values directly align with the TYCCO pillars of trust, unity, and service.

Representation Matters

Seeing Pasifika personnel and hearing authentic voices in NZDF media increases relatability and application intent. Qualitative research suggests that visible inclusion equals permission, potential recruits are more likely to apply when they see people who look and speak like them.

Key Barriers for Pasifika in Defence

- **Awareness Gap:** Limited visibility of professional and technical career options (e.g., health, logistics, engineering, IT) beyond combat roles.
- **Cultural Fit Concerns:** Perceived tension between Defence life and family or church commitments.

Pasifika in Defence – “Family You Can Count On” Marketing Campaign

- **Confidence Gap:** Self-doubt around eligibility or educational readiness, despite strong aptitude.
- **Visibility:** Few Pasifika role models in leadership and public campaigns, reducing relatability.
- **Retention:** Some difficulty balancing Defence commitments with family and community obligations.
- **Regional Access:** High Pasifika concentrations (Auckland, Porirua, Southland) are not always matched by recruiter availability or visibility.

These barriers are not due to lack of interest; they reflect limited awareness and structural underrepresentation.

What We Know About Pasifika and Gen Z Audiences:

Gen Z Insights (Aged 18–24)

- Seek purpose, stability, and connection.
- 1 in 4 New Zealand Gen Zs report financial difficulty, and 60 percent say cost of living impacts career choice (Ipsos 2025).
- 72 percent want a job that “makes a difference to others.”
- They value authenticity and community, Defence offers both.

Pasifika-Specific Insights

- Family is central to every major decision; success is viewed collectively.
- 68 percent of Pasifika youth report that family approval is the strongest influence on career choice (MBM Youth Deep Dive 2025).
- Pasifika Gen Z are highly digitally engaged, with above-average daily use of TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook.
- Storytelling and real voices drive trust polished institutional messaging is less effective.

“I’d join if I saw someone like me in uniform, someone who still goes to church, still laughs with their family.”

- Pasifika applicant, 2025 Intake Survey

This generation is ready to serve; they just need to see that Defence is a family they can belong to.

Pasifika in Defence – “Family You Can Count On” Marketing Campaign

What Does This Look Like?

A new creative evolution of TYCCO:

“Team You Can Count On.” - Visually show ‘family you can count on’ without using this slogan in the copy.

This iteration brings to life the parallels between NZDF values and Pasifika identity, loyalty, service, respect, and connection, through authentic storytelling.

Creative Direction

- Warm, community-centred tone.
- Pasifika personnel shown in uniform and at home with family, bridging both worlds. - potentially use a code word story: Sister Act as context about what defines family in the Pasifika community.
- Bilingual language elements (English, Samoan, Tongan, Cook Islands Māori) where appropriate.
- Visuals that balance cultural pride with professionalism, woven patterns, family gatherings, shared laughter, and teamwork scenes.

Messaging examples:

- Show that “My team is my **family**, in uniform and at home.” - don’t use this as wording in the copy, this is just the look and feel of the campaign.
- “Serving my people, serving my country.”
- “Faith. Family. Service. That’s the Defence way.”

Funnel View

Awareness

- Hero creative ideas: video and still imagery of Pasifika personnel and families.
- Community-focused storytelling highlighting unity and pride.
- Platforms: Meta, YouTube, Pasifika media eg: (531pi, Niu FM).
- Out-of-home activations near Pasifika community hubs and schools.

Interest

- Short-form interviews and reels with Pasifika members from varied trades.
- Collaborations with church youth groups, Pacific Business Trust, and Polyfest networks. - Will need to check with the Chaplaincy first.
- Q&A panels and live digital sessions featuring Pasifika mentors and recruiters. - already in play

Pasifika in Defence – “Family You Can Count On” Marketing Campaign

Desire

- Email & SMS nurturing journeys built around belonging, mentorship, and balance.
- Myth-busting content about faith, family, and Defence life.
- Video stories showing real NZDF families thriving together.

Action

- Direct CTA's to Defence Careers site and recruiter contact.
- Local activations at Pasifika Festival, Polyfest, and community expos. Check with our OP's first.
- Recruiter presence at schools with high a Pasifika enrolment.

Why

Increasing Pasifika participation strengthens NZDF's operational capability, cultural awareness, and connection with Pacific partners. Pasifika personnel bring linguistic diversity, empathy, and leadership grounded in community values. Their contribution enhances humanitarian missions, disaster relief, and engagement across the Pacific region. The Pacific Peoples Strategy identifies the vision of “Pasifika thriving within the NZDF”, this campaign turns that vision into visible representation.

Why It Matters for NZDF

- Regional Influence: Builds cultural fluency and credibility across the Pacific.
- Operational Cohesion: Improves teamwork through cultural understanding and shared values.
- Community Engagement: Reflects NZDF's role as a partner and protector of all New Zealanders.
- Workforce Diversity: Expands recruitment pipelines and leadership potential.

This campaign directly supports NZDF's strategic outcomes:

- Increase Pasifika representation across all ranks and trades.
- Enhance leadership visibility of Pasifika personnel.
- Embed cultural capability in training and operations.
- Strengthen engagement with Pasifika communities nationally and regionally.

Our Commitments

To deliver on the Pacific Peoples Strategy 2020–2025, NZDF focuses on four pillars:

Pasifika in Defence – “Family You Can Count On” Marketing Campaign

1. **Leadership and Representation** – Strengthen pathways for Pasifika to move into leadership roles.
2. **Recruitment and Retention** – Increase visibility and provide mentoring to support career progression.
3. **Cultural Competence** – Build cultural awareness training across all Services.
4. **Pacific Engagement** – Deepen relationships with Pasifika communities and regional partners.

These pillars underpin the TYCCO Pasifika extension and ensure the campaign contributes meaningfully to NZDF’s long-term inclusion goals.

When

Defence Recruiting’s overall approach is to Market to Intake.
Outside intake peaks, NZDF can focus on storytelling that deepens inclusion.

Suggested target Windows:

- December – January
- June – July

Activations:

- Pasifika Festival
- Polyfest
- Church and community events
- Secondary school engagements in South Auckland, Porirua, Hutt Valley, Christchurch

Next Steps

- Identify 2–3 Pasifika personnel stories with D&I and DPA.
- Develop ‘Family’ You Can Count On mission content with Special.
- Build and test Pasifika-focused email & SMS automation in Marketing Cloud.
- Schedule Zeil and social amplification targeted trade ads with MBM for top and middle-of-funnel reach. Ask MBM for a specific Pasifika media plan.
- Coordinate DPA for existing imagery
- Launch December 2025 campaign cycle ahead of next intake.

Pasifika in Defence – “Family You Can Count On” Marketing Campaign

Annex – Key Data Summary

Metric	Value	Source
Pasifika representation in NZDF Regular Force	4.6 %	NZDF Pacific Peoples Strategy 2020–2025
National Pasifika population	8.1 %	Stats NZ Census 2023
Pasifika personnel under 25 years old	54.9 %	NZDF HR Data 2025
Highest representation by service	Army – 2.9 %	NZDF PPS 2020–2025
Target increase by 2027	+3 % representation across services	NZDF D&I Goal
Key recruitment regions	Auckland, Wellington, Canterbury, Waikato	NZDF Recruiting 2025
Median Pasifika age	23.4 years (vs NZ average 38)	Stats NZ Census 2023

Pasifika in Defence – “Family You Can Count On” Marketing Campaign

Sources

NZDF Core Frameworks

1. **New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF). Pacific Peoples Strategy 2020–2025.**
 - Details current Pasifika representation (4.6 %), demographic profile (54.9 % under 25 years), and alignment with NZDF’s strategic goal of becoming a culturally competent organisation.
 - Articulates Pacific values Family, Collectivism, Reciprocity, Spirituality, Respect and their integration with NZDF’s teamwork and service ethos
2. **New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF). Kia Eke Māori Strategic Framework (2021).**
 - Provides principles of whanaungatanga (connection), manaakitanga (care and respect), and cultural competence that inform NZDF inclusion and leadership frameworks.

Demographic and Population Data

3. **Stats NZ (2023 Census). Pacific Peoples Population Data.**
 - Pasifika population = 8.1 % of total NZ population; median age = 23.4 years (vs NZ average 38).
 - Used to benchmark representation targets and youth-dominant demographic profile.
4. **Ministry for Pacific Peoples (MPP). Pacific People in New Zealand Demographics Overview (2023).**
 - Confirms youth skew (55 % under 25) and expected growth to ~10 % by 2038, validating recruitment-pipeline potential.

Youth and Cultural Insights (External Market References)

5. **Ipsos New Zealand. Gen Z New Zealand Youth Report 2025 Employment and Values Segment (placeholder citation).**
 - 1 in 4 Gen Zs report financial difficulty; 60 % say cost of living impacts career choice; 72 % want jobs that “make a difference.”
 - Referenced for contextual Gen Z sentiment shaping campaign tone.
6. **MBM Group / Defence Recruiting. Youth Deep Dive 2025 (placeholder citation).**
 - Indicates 68 % of Pasifika youth view family approval as the strongest career influence; high social-media engagement (TikTok, Instagram, Facebook).
 - Used to support “family endorsement” and “digital storytelling” insights.
7. **Ministry for Pacific Peoples & Pasifika Futures (2024). Pacific Youth Wellbeing and Engagement Survey.**

Pasifika in Defence – “Family You Can Count On” Marketing Campaign

- *Highlights collective definitions of success and the importance of belonging, faith, and intergenerational pride in career decisions.*

Supplementary Policy Alignment

8. **Ministry of Defence (2019).** *Advancing Pacific Partnerships Framework (“Vaka Tahī Model”).*
 - *Reinforces NZ as a Pacific nation and the need for people-to-people cultural intelligence in Defence engagements.*
9. **Te Kawa Mataaho / Public Service Commission (2021).** *People25 Diversity and Inclusion Goals.*
 - *Recognises cultural competence and employee-led networks as priority commitments for workforce inclusion*

Women in Defence Marketing Campaign

Problem Statement

While main message recall of connections and comradeship has been strong for the Join a Team You Can Count On (TYCCO) campaign, the need exists to improve messaging around inclusivity.

This campaign is focused on improving 'inclusivity' messaging within the TYCCO campaign, specifically among women.

Goal

Increase campaign messaging to improve a sense of inclusion among women aged 18-24

Improve 'inclusive' as a key message takeaway among women aged 18-24 above the baseline of 4% for all people who recall viewing the campaign.

What We've Learned

The TYCCO campaign has driven positive change among the target audience aged 18-24 for its primary KPIs¹:

Primary KPI	Pre Campaign	Post Campaign Total	Post for those who have seen the campaign	Change total	Change seen
Fits with my personality	28%	29%	42%	1%	14%
Fits with my skills and/or qualifications	27%	31%	39%	4%	12%
Fits with my values	36%	36%	46%	0%	10%
Is a place where I would belong	26%	28%	42%	2%	14%

Early indications show that females are as likely to recall the campaign as males (Ipsos), and males and females are equally willing to learn more about New Zealand Defence Force².

However, our research also shows that only 4% of all people who viewed the campaign recalled 'inclusive' as a main message (Ipsos). This is not surprising, as it was not a primary message for the campaign launch materials. However, as we expand the campaign's creative content, we have an opportunity to improve inclusiveness as a campaign takeaway.

¹ Ipsos NZDF Campaign Tracking Apr-Jun 2025

² MBM Team You Can Count On Social Deep Dive

Key barriers for women in defence

Generally attracting women to under-represented trades: Women may be less aware of the opportunities within NZDF. A Ministry of Women's Affairs (2012) study noted that female students who had high aptitudes in mathematics and science were more likely than males to state they had no idea what engineering was or what job opportunities existed.³ It is hoped there has been some awareness advances for young women in the past 13 years since this study was published, however, continuing to build awareness among young women of NZDF careers continues to be valuable.

Despite decades of progress under the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, women remain under-represented across the defence and security sectors, both globally and within New Zealand. The National Action Plan highlights that systemic and structural barriers continue to limit women's full and meaningful participation, from cultural perceptions of defence as a male-dominated field to inequities in career pathways, leadership visibility, and workplace safety. Persistent gender stereotypes, low awareness of women's roles in peace and security, and the enduring association of defence work with combat rather than service, leadership, and protection all deter potential female recruits at the attraction stage. These barriers are reinforced by concerns about inclusion, harmful behaviour, and technology-facilitated gender-based violence.

To attract women into Defence, we must counter these outdated narratives by elevating authentic female voices, highlighting diverse pathways of contribution, and showcasing Defence as a place where women lead, influence, shape peace and security in Aotearoa and the wider Indo-Pacific.

We can reframe Defence as a place where women lead, protect, innovate, and belong. By humanising the Defence story through authentic female voices and storytelling that highlight contribution, purpose, and leadership beyond combat, we can expand what "service" looks like. This is an opportunity to modernise perception, showing that Defence careers span intelligence, logistics, health, engineering, technology, diplomacy, and humanitarian response, and that women already shape New Zealand's security and peace efforts at every level. Campaigns that champion inclusion, strength through diversity, and real examples of impact can transform awareness into aspiration, positioning the NZDF as a modern, equitable employer where women are essential to the mission, not an exception within it.

During the recruiting process

Below are key takeaways from current application declines. Please see Annex for detailed tables.

³ NZ Ministry of Defence, Maximizing Opportunities for Military Women in the New Zealand Defence Force February 2014

- Over 91% of declines in 2025 were at the Application phase (App Received / under review)
- The percent of declines for education and medical reasons has been increasing.
- Women are more likely than men to decline medical.
- Women are less likely to close due to inactivity or to decline because of citizenship.
- Women make up about 25% of applications but are 3-6% lower in attestation rate.

What we know about GenZ⁴

Our 18-24 target audience fits within the Generation Z generational age grouping, currently 13-39. Ipsos research on GenZ indicates the following generalisations about people:

- They feel stressed
- They're worried about the cost of living and price of houses
- 1 in 4 New Zealand GenZrs are finding it difficult to manage financially
- More than half are concerned about their rent or mortgage payments
- And they believe expenses will continue to rise

There is a generational disconnect when it comes to milestones like buying homes, getting married, and starting families. Financial realities are keeping those dreams out of reach for many. This is feeding widespread sentiment that it's better to live for today – either because tomorrow is uncertain, or that it will simply take care of itself, especially when they feel that the world around them is doomed.

The younger half of GenZ – aged 16-24 are the most likely to feel that the important thing is to enjoy life today, tomorrow will take care of itself. Enjoying today and securing the future don't need to be in conflict. Learning skills and gaining qualifications on the job while also having an adventure and building life-long connections, is part of the Defence Force proposition.

On the plus side:

- GenZrs are more optimistic about their future standard of living than older generations
- And they want to make new friends
- But they find it difficult to connect with people

We can offer them job security and the connection they crave.

Young women in the 18-24 target age range in general have more progressive attitudes toward women in the workforce than men. This may indicate an increased acceptance of women in non-traditional roles, such as combat military roles.

⁴ Ipsos What We Know About GenZ August 2025

What does this look like?

A new TYCCO creative execution that enhances the primary connections/comradery messaging through the perspective of women in defence. This will use multi-channel top- and middle-funnel activity (email, digital ads, social media) to target the right audience with the right message. We will seek to use imagery that represents the ethnic diversity of NZDF.

Funnel View

Awareness

Broad messaging via social media and targeted ads via a new mission concept featuring women in defence to be developed by Special. Social media targeted by MBM: 18-24 Audience.

Interest

Engaging content such as short-form video (Missions), personal stories, and testimonials that show women in defence. Marketing will explore DPA's library and/or interest and capacity to development personal stories in the first instance. If nothing suitable exists and DPA doesn't have the capacity, Marketing will seek out stories with assistance from Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) and copy will be drafted inhouse. Special may be used to provide advice on execution.

Desire

Email automation journeys and targeted remarketing focusing on women in defence:

Email Automation Journeys

- **Who/How:** Built and managed in-house by Marketing Automation Specialist through Marketing Cloud. Content will be drafted internally, based on content derived in Interest phase.
- **Funding:** No additional spend required; this is covered by existing Marketing Cloud licensing.
- **Difference from DPA:** Our emails are funnel-driven, personalised, and timed to intake demand. DPA storytelling is broad and public-facing, while our comms nurture individual leads over time with targeted myth-busting and benefit-driven content.

Targeted Remarketing

- **Who/How:** Managed in-house via Zeil. Marketing Automation Specialist role oversees creative and includes women in trade ad photography wherever it is available, with Zeil providing performance optimisation.
- **Funding:** No out-of-pocket due to Zeil partnership agreement.

Personal Stories & Testimonials

- **Who/How:** Two pathways:
 - **If DPA has capacity:**
 - Utilise existing stories, repurposed from NZDF social media
 - Leverage their storytelling teams for professional shoots.
 - **If not:** content sourced by Marketing supported by D&I, drafted and published in-house (low-cost approach). Special may be used to provide advice on execution.
- **Funding:** In-house information gathering = no extra spend. If DPA is used, costs sit with their budget.

Action

Clear calls-to-action directing to the Defence Careers site, supported by easy application processes and myth-busting resources.

Digital Advertising (Zeil Platform)

Led by Marketing Automation Specialist

Advertising through Zeil will provide a top-of-the-funnel boost by targeting those who fall within key demographic groups. Our ads will:

- Support both awareness and consideration phases
- Be optimised over time based on performance data and engagement metrics

This stream will help drive traffic to both the Defence Careers site and our email marketing and automation.

Social Media Content

Led by Digital Channels Coordinator

Social media will deliver the organic storytelling component of the campaign, showcasing women in defence. This arm will:

- Feature a mix of informational and behind-the-scenes content
- Share authentic voices and experiences, including material provided by D&I and DPA
- Reinforce broader campaign messaging with relatable, platform-friendly assets

This content will help build inclusiveness messaging while also helping drive traffic to both the Defence Careers site and our email marketing and automation.

Email Marketing & Automation

Led by Marketing Automation Specialist

Email will play a central role in nurturing leads through an automated journey built in Marketing Cloud. This will allow us to:

- Educate prospective applicants about life in the defence for women
- Highlight key benefits and bust common misconceptions
- Encourage sustained interest with personalised content based on user behaviour

The goal is to keep leads engaged over time and help them move closer to taking action.

Why

Increasing the percentage of women in military roles is seen as an important action to strengthen operational effectiveness and enhance military and decision-making capability. Fifty percent of the civilian population that the NZDF comes into contact with while deployed are female, and in much of New Zealand's area of influence cultural restrictions prohibit females from having any contact with males outside their family. (NZ MoD)

STRENGTHENING OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS THROUGH INCLUSION.

THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY (WPS) AGENDA RECOGNISES THAT WOMEN ARE ESSENTIAL CONTRIBUTORS TO PEACE, SECURITY, AND STABILITY. AS A SIGNATORY TO UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325, NZDF IS COMMITTED TO INTEGRATING WPS PRINCIPLES INTO ALL ASPECTS OF OUR WORK.

WHY IT MATTERS FOR NZDF

- *ENHANCES OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY BY UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS, ROLES, AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF GENDER IN CONFLICT AND CRISIS ENVIRONMENTS.*
- *IMPROVES SITUATIONAL AWARENESS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ON DEPLOYMENTS.*
- *SUPPORTS OUR COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS, PROTECTION, AND INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP.*

OUR COMMITMENTS

TO MEET ITS RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON WPS, NZDF FOCUSES ON:

- *PARTICIPATION – INCREASING MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING AT ALL LEVELS, INCLUDING OPERATIONS, PLANNING, PEACE NEGOTIATIONS LEADERSHIP ROLES.*
- *PROTECTION – PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS FROM GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT, INCLUDING SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE.*
- *PREVENTION – INTEGRATING GENDER PERSPECTIVES INTO CONFLICT PREVENTION, PEACE BUILDING, AND SECURITY ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE INTERVENTION STRATEGIES AND STRENGTHEN WOMEN'S RIGHTS.*
- *RELIEF AND RECOVERY – ENSURING POST-CONFLICT RECOVERY AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE ADDRESS THE NEEDS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF ALL GENDERS AND TAKE INTO*

ACCOUNT THE PARTICULAR NEEDS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS.⁵

As at 30 June 2025 the NZDF Regular Force gender breakdowns are as follows:

Service	Female	Male	Target for women
Navy	27%	73%	30%
Army	15%	85%	25% Combat Support 35% Combat Service Support
Air Force	24%	76%	25%

When

The Defence Recruiting overall strategy is to Market to Intake. Outside of intake 'seasons', there is more latitude to expand messaging to give voice to inclusiveness. Outside of intake season for the 2025-26 Fiscal Year is primarily December-January and June. We will target these months to enhance the campaign messaging with D&I messaging, including women in defence messaging.

Next Steps

- Create Women in Defence Mission content with Special
- Build and test the email automation journey in Marketing Cloud
- Begin development of a social content calendar and asset library
- Collaborate with D&I and DPA to source additional content
- Launch the first campaign cycle aligned to low intake 9-10 months out

⁵ Women Peace and Security ddms-r/ds/D1-0110/05/WPS_Page_2025.pdf

ANNEX

SUBJECT – REASONS FOR APPLICATIONS DECLINES

Gender	Initial Applications			Attestations		
	Female	Male	% Fem	Female	Male	%fem
2017	400	1138	26.0%	196	654	23.1%
2018	1869	5501	25.4%	201	697	22.4%
2019	2337	6175	27.5%	191	683	21.9%
2020	2583	7109	26.7%	190	591	24.3%
2021	2001	5331	27.3%	213	714	23.0%
2022	1909	5582	25.5%	186	660	22.0%
2023	2110	6479	24.6%	164	563	22.6%
2024	2368	7325	24.4%	153	663	18.8%
2025	1799	5416	24.9%	135	616	18.0%

Female																
Staus when Application Declines	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Application Received	178	148	168	160	180	93	233	240	17.05%	11.67%	11.45%	14.05%	11.16%	4.91%	10.97%	16.89%
Application Stand Down	92	52	81	59	74	93	60	20	8.81%	4.10%	5.52%	5.18%	4.59%	4.91%	2.82%	1.41%
Application Under Review	561	768	922	670	1143	1477	1595	1069	53.74%	60.57%	62.85%	58.82%	70.86%	77.90%	75.09%	75.23%
Ready for Assessment	45	82	120	85	107	129	128	66	4.31%	6.47%	8.18%	7.46%	6.63%	6.80%	6.03%	4.64%
Selected for Assessment	96	129	92	51	38	51	42	11	9.20%	10.17%	6.27%	4.48%	2.36%	2.69%	1.98%	0.77%
Assessment Report Under Review	18	20	18	60	37	16	12	5	1.72%	1.58%	1.23%	5.27%	2.29%	0.84%	0.56%	0.35%
Ready for Interview	5	2	2	7	1	4	5	0	0.48%	0.16%	0.14%	0.61%	0.06%	0.21%	0.24%	0.00%
Selected for Interview	6	10	10	7	3	3	6	3	0.57%	0.79%	0.68%	0.61%	0.19%	0.16%	0.28%	0.21%
Interview Report Under Review	6	6	7	3	2	4	3	1	0.57%	0.47%	0.48%	0.26%	0.12%	0.21%	0.14%	0.07%
Consider for Selection	7	4	7	9	5	4	5	0	0.67%	0.32%	0.48%	0.79%	0.31%	0.21%	0.24%	0.00%
Ready for Selection	20	33	21	18	7	11	25	1	1.92%	2.60%	1.43%	1.58%	0.43%	0.58%	1.18%	0.07%
Offer of Service Sent	8	12	6	5	7	8	4	1	0.77%	0.95%	0.41%	0.44%	0.43%	0.42%	0.19%	0.07%
Pre-Enlistment Preparation and Screening	1	1	4	4	5	0	3	0	0.10%	0.08%	0.27%	0.35%	0.31%	0.00%	0.14%	0.00%
Ready for Intake	1	1	9	1	4	3	3	4	0.10%	0.08%	0.61%	0.09%	0.25%	0.16%	0.14%	0.28%

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

[illegible]

*CDTI means Closed Due To Inactivity

Reframing TYCCO through a Māori Lens: “Whānau You Can Count On”

Problem Statement

While the Join a Team You Can Count On (TYCCO) campaign has effectively highlighted teamwork and belonging, it underrepresents the Māori worldview and cultural identity within the Defence narrative. Māori have a long and proud history of service, from the 28th Māori Battalion to today’s generation of officers, engineers, medics, and leaders. Yet, these stories of identity, purpose, and collective strength are not consistently reflected in NZDF’s current creative.

The Kia Eke Māori Strategic Framework (2021–2025) calls for “Māori succeeding as Māori in the NZDF,” emphasising that Māori identity is a source of operational strength, not something to incorporate. To attract, inspire, and retain Māori talent, NZDF must reflect shared values of whakapapa, manaakitanga, and whanaungatanga, positioning the Defence Force as an extension of whānau and iwi, not apart from it.

Goal

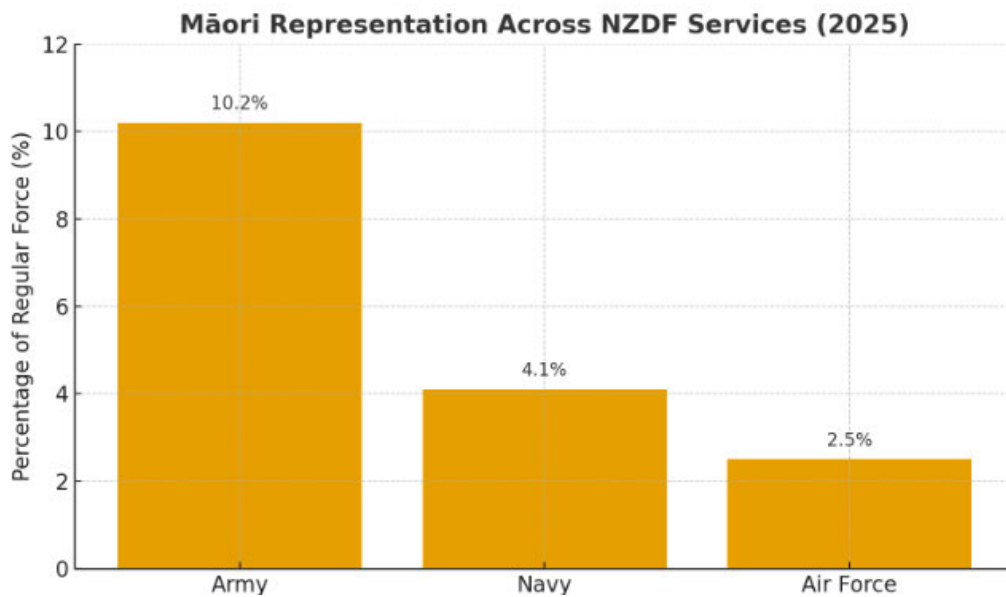
- Strengthen inclusivity, belonging, and pride in Māori identity among youth aged 18 – 30.
- Improve “relatability” and “cultural connection” as key campaign takeaways.
- Increase awareness of the diverse career pathways across NZDF that align with Māori values of leadership, service, and guardianship.
- Reinforce NZDF as a place where Māori can thrive while staying true to whānau, tikanga, and te reo Māori.

What We’ve Learned

Māori Insights

- Māori currently make up 18 percent of the NZDF Regular Force, nearing national population but unevenly spread across services.
- Representation is strongest in the Army (10.2 percent), followed by Navy (4.1 percent) and Air Force (2.5 percent).
- Māori are over-represented in entry ranks but under-represented in senior leadership, signalling a need for targeted advancement pathways.
- Half of Māori personnel are under 30, highlighting strong youth potential and a need for retention through early-career support.

Reframing TYCCO through a Māori Lens: “Whānau You Can Count On”



Gen Z Insights (Aged 18–24)

- Seek purpose, stability, and connection in their work.
- 1 in 4 New Zealand Gen Zs report financial difficulty, and 60 percent say cost-of-living pressures shape career choice (Ipsos 2025).
- 72 percent want a job that “makes a difference to others.”
- They value authenticity, representation, and community, qualities embodied by the NZDF.

Māori-Specific Motivators

- Whānau, iwi, and cultural pride are the primary motivators for joining the NZDF.
- Service is seen to uplift whānau and carry mana.
- Representation matters, seeing Māori leaders, te reo Māori, and cultural values embedded in messaging strengthens trust and connection.

Key Barriers

- Limited awareness of non-combat career paths (e.g., engineering, logistics, health, intelligence).
- Misconception that Defence life conflicts with whānau, faith, or tikanga.
- Low visibility of Māori in leadership across public-facing content.
- Cultural hesitation around hierarchical structures perceived as Pākehā-centric.
- Lack of clarity on how the NZDF supports Māori identity and tikanga in everyday life.

Reframing TYCCO through a Māori Lens: “Whānau You Can Count On”

Strategy

Reframing TYCCO through a Māori Lens: “Whānau You Can Count On” - We don’t want to use this as the exact copy as we will still use ‘team you can count on’ but we want to showcase the feeling of Whanau messaging through the imagery and feel of the campaign.

This campaign evolution honours the shared values of kotahitanga (unity), manaakitanga (care), and whanaungatanga (connection) that underpin both Māori culture and NZDF ethos.

By featuring real Māori personnel and their whānau, we position NZDF service as a continuation of whakapapa, a journey of contribution and pride that strengthens one’s identity rather than separates from it.

Creative Direction

- Authentic storytelling grounded in te ao Māori values.
- Visuals combining service life with whānau and whenua, the balance of commitment and belonging.
- Bilingual messaging (English and te reo Māori) to create cultural resonance.
- Headlines such as “He toa takitini, Strength in unity” to connect legacy to modern service.

Funnel View

Awareness

- Hero video and stills featuring Māori personnel and their families. Could re-do the audio in Te Rao Maori? Or do another mission story?
- Social and digital advertising (Meta & YouTube) featuring bilingual copy and Māori narrators.
- Partnership with iwi radio, Māori TV, and Te Wānanga networks for reach.

Interest

- Short-form “day-in-the-life” and interview content showcasing Māori across trades and ranks.
- “He Kōrero o te Ope” (Stories of the Force) a recurring feature series on YouTube exploring service journeys. These will be sourced from already existing content from DPA

Desire/Nurture

- Email and SMS nurture sequences focused on belonging, leadership, and whānau balance.

Reframing TYCCO through a Māori Lens: “Whānau You Can Count On”

- Myth-busting content: “You don’t leave your whānau; you bring them with you.”
- Highlight training, trade pathways, and transferable civilian qualifications.

Action

- Clear CTAs to Defence Careers portal, including Māori-language entry options.
- Recruiter engagement at iwi expos, Te Matatini, Māori Business Network events.
- Strengthen community presence at Waitangi Day, Matariki, and regional kapa haka.

Why It Matters

Māori bring intergenerational values of courage, service, and unity, qualities vital to NZDF’s mission. Enhancing Māori representation and leadership strengthens NZDF’s connection to the people it serves and the land it protects. The Kia Eke Framework affirms that “Māori success is NZDF success.” By embedding te ao Māori across recruitment storytelling, we honour whakapapa, build mana motuhake, and create a Defence Force that reflects Aotearoa’s identity and strength.

Representation and Retention

Insights

- Māori representation strongest in Army; leadership visibility lags in Navy/Air Force.
- Māori women remain under-represented (< 6 %), presenting an inclusion opportunity.
- Retention highest in community-oriented trades such as logistics, medics, and recruiting.

When

- Activate outside major intake peak times (Dec–Jan and Jun–Jul).
- Align messaging with Māori cultural calendar, Waitangi Day, Te Matatini, Matariki, Māori Language Week, and iwi-based career events.

Reframing TYCCO through a Māori Lens: “Whānau You Can Count On”

Next Steps

1. Identify 2–3 Māori personnel stories with DPA.
2. Develop “Whānau You Can Count On” creative assets with Special.
3. Build supporting email/SMS automations via Marketing Cloud.
4. Partner with Zeil and Māori media for targeted remarketing. MBM to assist with the targeted marketing?
5. Launch the first campaign cycle in off-peak months.

Sources & References

- *NZDF Kia Eke Māori Strategic Framework 2021–2025*
- *MBM TYCCO Social Performance Deep Dive 2025*
- *Ipsos NZDF Campaign Tracking 2025 (Q2)*
- *NZDF Personnel Demographics June 2025 – Directorate of HR Insights*
- *Te Puni Kōkiri – Māori Youth Employment and Education Trends 2025*
- *Stats NZ – Labour Force Survey 2025: Māori Population Summary*