

HON JUDITH COLLINS KC, MINISTER OF DEFENCE

AUSTRALIA-NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE MINISTERS' MEETING

February 2025

This publication provides the briefing pack to support the Minister of Defence's participation in the second Defence Ministers' Meeting of 2024. The Defence Ministers' Meeting is a formal meeting as part of the Australia-New Zealand Defence Dialogue Architecture.

The release of the Australia-New Zealand Joint Statement on Closer Defence Relations as an outcome of the Defence Ministers' Meeting can be found on the Ministry's website at: <https://defence.govt.nz/publications/australia-new-zealand-joint-statement-on-closer-defence-relations/>

The pack comprises the following documents:

- the Australia-New Zealand Defence Ministers' Meeting Briefing Document

This pack has been released on the Ministry of Defence website, available at: www.defence.govt.nz/publications/australia-new-zealand-defence-ministers-meeting

It has been necessary to withhold certain information in accordance with the following provisions of the Official Information Act 1982. Where information is withheld, the relevant sections of the Act are indicated in the body of the document. Where information has been withheld in accordance with section 9(2) of the Act, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

Information is withheld where making it available would be likely to prejudice:

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

In addition, certain information has been withheld in order to:

- maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any department or organisation in the course of their duty [section 9(2)(g)(i)].

AUSTRALIA–NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE MINISTERS’ MEETING

Briefing Document

6 December 2024

Auckland, New Zealand



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TAB ONE: OVERVIEW

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Overview and Objectives

You will host your Defence Ministerial counterpart, Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Hon Richard Marles, in Auckland and take part in the Defence Ministers' Meeting (DMM). You will also meet with Foreign Minister Hon Penny Wong, alongside Deputy Prime Minister Rt Hon Winston Peters as part of the ANZMIN meeting. This will be your fifth formal engagement with DPM Marles, following your most recent meeting at the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting in October 2024.

The Importance of the Defence Ministers' Meeting

The Defence Ministers' Meeting (DMM) is a formal annual meeting as part of the Australia-New Zealand Defence Dialogue Architecture. This meeting provides a valuable opportunity for you to have an in-depth discussion across a range of defence areas with DPM Marles, in advance of the ANZMIN meeting with Defence and Foreign Affairs Ministers, scheduled to take place immediately afterwards.

It is an opportune time for you and DPM Marles to look back on the last 12 months of the Australia-New Zealand Defence relationship, and to determine the priorities for the relationship moving forward. [REDACTED] s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

This will be your second formal Defence Ministers' Meeting with DPM Marles.

Agenda

The agenda has three key thematic areas:

1. Opening remarks with a reflection on the last 12 months (New Zealand lead)
2. Alliance and Deterrence (Australia lead)
3. Integrated 'Anzac' Force (New Zealand lead)

Key Objectives for New Zealand

There are three key objectives New Zealand is seeking to achieve from this meeting:

- 1. Demonstrate our value as an ally by reflecting on progress made to modernise our Alliance:**
 - Reflect on the key initiatives and achievements we've jointly progressed in the last 12 months. [REDACTED] s6(a)
 - Emphasise the value New Zealand continues to place on our Alliance, and the steps we've taken to publically articulate its value.

2. [REDACTED] s6(a), s6(b)(i)
[REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] s6(a)
3. **Determine an agreed understanding and way forward for the integrated 'Anzac' force:**
- [REDACTED] s6(a)
 - Direct officials to progress work to understand our policy parameters [REDACTED] s6(a) [REDACTED] to determine an ideal end-state for the integrated 'Anzac' force.

Delegation

You will be accompanied by:

- Air Marshal Tony Davies (Chief of Defence Force)
- Dr Brook Barrington (Secretary of Defence)
- Kathleen Pearce (Head of International Branch, Ministry of Defence)
- Brigadier Andy Shaw (Assistant Chief Strategic Commitments and Engagements, NZDF)
- Captain Andy Dowling (Defence Advisor to Australia, NZDF)
- [REDACTED] s9(2)(g)(i) (Senior Private Secretary)
- [REDACTED] s9(2)(g)(i) (Private Secretary, Defence)
- [REDACTED] s9(2)(g)(i) (Intermediate Analyst – Australia, Ministry of Defence)
- [REDACTED] s9(2)(g)(i) (Personal Staff Officer to CDF)

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Defence Ministers' Meeting Agenda
Auckland, 6 December 2024
0815 - 0900

Time	Agenda Item	Lead
0815 - 0825	2. Opening Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Reflections over the last 12 months</i>	New Zealand 10 minutes
0825 - 0840	3. Alliance / Deterrence <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Reflections on the ANZUS alliance</i> s6(a)	Australia 15 minutes
0840 - 0855	4. Integrated 'Anzac' Force <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Discuss future possibilities for an Integrated Anzac Force</i>	New Zealand 15 minutes
0855 - 0900	5. Closing Remarks	Australia 5 minutes

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TAB TWO: ANNOTATED AGENDA

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Agenda Item I: Opening Remarks

Lead: New Zealand, 10 minutes

Agenda item overview: reflections over the last 12 months

Key messages

- Welcome to New Zealand, and thank you for travelling to Auckland again so soon after we last met at SPDMM. It's great to be able to host you and Foreign Minister Wong after your generous hospitality earlier this year.
- I am really looking forward to our discussions this morning, and continuing a wider discussion with our Foreign Affairs counterparts later.
- Over the last 12 months, the bilateral defence relationship has continued to go from strength to strength, and I know we are in a stronger position to address the challenges of our region.
 - [REDACTED] s6(a)
 - We are about to **sign an updated Joint Statement on Closer Defence Relations** that reaffirms our commitment to our Alliance.
 - We have **stood up the Pacific Response Group** and taken a step closer to building interoperability amongst our Pacific defence forces.
 - We have **publically affirmed our commitment to recognising that a cyber-attack** could constitute an armed attack under ANZUS.
 - We have made significant progress on interoperability, including by **embedding our personnel within one another's Joint Force headquarters** in deputy commander-level positions.
 - We have also **demonstrated our long-standing and enduring commitment to the international rules-based order** and freedom of navigation [REDACTED] s6(a)
 - Our Air Forces and Navies have followed in the footsteps of Army's Plan Anzac and agreed **Plan Astra** [REDACTED] s6(a) to ensure our **services are striving for interoperability**.
- [REDACTED] s6(a) our relationship is one of mutual trust, respect, and maturity, where we can have honest and frank conversations, [REDACTED] s6(a) [REDACTED] We will always seek to reinforce the closeness and importance of New Zealand and Australia's relationship [REDACTED] s6(a) .
- I would like our conversation today to continue to build on the discussions we've had throughout this year, and to be a free and frank exchange, to support consideration of how we ensure our Alliance is strengthened against the backdrop of heightened strategic tension, in an increasingly contested geostrategic environment.

Agenda Item II: Alliance / Deterrence

Lead: Australia, 15 minutes

Agenda item overview: the ANZUS Alliance, [redacted] s6(a)

Key Objectives

- **Reaffirm** our desire to continue our path of closer engagement and joint activities, in a way that addresses our shared and national interests, and demonstrates our commitment to the Alliance.
- **Reaffirm** our enduring commitment to the Alliance, and highlight the collective progress we've made on publically articulating this commitment.

- [redacted] s6(a)

[redacted] s6(a)

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Key messages

ANZUS Alliance

- [redacted] s6(a)

- [redacted] s6(a)

- I'm pleased that we are signing the updated Joint Statement on Closer Defence Relations, which will make clear our commitment to ANZUS. I also see value in using our Alliance as a framing for publically messaging joint initiatives we undertake in the future.

- [redacted] s6(a)

Pacific Response Group

- New Zealand is fully committed to the Pacific Response Group. While we have taken a fly-in, fly-out model, the team is making valuable contributions to the training and development of the Pacific Special Advisory Team (P-SAT).
- New Zealand's public support to this initiative will be reinforced in the Joint Statement on Closer Defence Relations.
- [Redacted] s6(a)

Deterrence

- Our understanding of the strategic environment is well aligned with Australia's. I have been very clear in my public messaging, since taking this role, that we no longer live in a benign geostrategic environment.

- [Redacted] s6(a), s6(b)(i)
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

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Background

s6(a), s6(b)(i)

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s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

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s6(a)

¹ Defence policy settings were last updated in 2023 with the release of the *Defence Policy and Strategy Statement 2023* (DPSS) and the *Future Force Design Principles 2023* (FFDP) [CAB-23-MIN-0264 and CAB-23-MIN-0265 refers].

s6(a)



*Policy Branch, Ministry of Defence
December 2024*

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Agenda Item III: Integrated 'Anzac' Force

Lead: New Zealand, 15 minutes

Agenda item overview: discuss future possibilities for an Integrated Anzac Force

Key objectives

- [Redacted] s6(a)
[Redacted]
- [Redacted] s6(a)
[Redacted]

[Redacted] s6(a)

[Redacted]

Key messages

Ambition for an Integrated Anzac Force

- For New Zealand, we see the Integrated Anzac Force concept as a state in which our defence forces are able to seamlessly work and operate together across the areas of policy, capability, operations and people. We are starting from a very solid base in this regard and have already achieved high levels of integration in all these areas.
- [Redacted] s6(a)
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
- [Redacted] s6(a), s6(b)(i)
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
- [Redacted] s6(a)
[Redacted] For New Zealand, demonstrating our value to Australia is a core

priority. [redacted] s6(a)

- [redacted] s6(a)
- New Zealand has no closer partner than Australia, nor any other partner with which we can speak so frankly and honestly. I expect these discussions [redacted] s6(a) to continue in an open manner and we will be upfront about where we may have any areas of difference, as well as any progress we are making.

Background

Integrated Anzac Force

Since the February Defence Ministers' Meeting, Defence officials have been working on defining and conceptualising the notion of an integrated 'Anzac' force. Some of the areas we have achieved more integration in over the last 12 months have been:

- [redacted] s6(a)
- An **updated Joint Statement on Closer Defence Relations**;
- Stood up **the Pacific Response Group** to improve Pacific interoperability;
- Public affirmation of our **commitment to recognising that a cyber-attack** could constitute an armed attack under ANZUS;
- Significant progress on interoperability, including by **embedding our personnel within one another's Joint Force headquarters** in deputy commander-level positions.
- Demonstrated our **long-standing and enduring commitment to the international rules-based order** and freedom of navigation [redacted] s6(a)
- Air Forces and Navies have followed in the footsteps of Army's Plan Anzac and agreed **Plan Astra** [redacted] s6(a) to ensure our **services are striving for interoperability**.
- [redacted] s6(a), s6(b)(i)
- **Increased combined regional activities** i.e. CHOGM, Solomon Islands' National General Election, responses to the Enga landslide in Papua New Guinea, and military evacuations from Noumea;
- [redacted] s6(a)
- [redacted] s6(a)

2. [redacted] s6(a)

s6(a)

3. [REDACTED] s6(a)

4. [REDACTED] s6(a)

*International Branch, Policy Branch
November 2024*

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Agenda Item IV: Closing Remarks

Lead: Australia, 5 minutes

Key messages

- *[Handling note: you may wish to share any personal reflections from the meeting]*
- Thank you again for making the time to travel to New Zealand. I've really valued the discussions we've had this morning, and I take comfort in knowing that we continue to be aligned in our view of the geostrategic environment [REDACTED] s6(a)
[REDACTED]
- Our alliance has never been more important, [REDACTED] s6(a)
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- I look forward to signing the updated Joint Statement on Closer Defence Relations shortly, a long overdue component of our defence relationship. It will be great to have this publicly released, and to further signal our commitment to one another and our alliance.

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TAB THREE: BACKGROUND BRIEFS

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Previous Defence Ministers' Meeting Outcomes

s6(a), s6(b)(i)

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Australia's National Defence Strategy (NDS)

The NDS reaffirmed that Australia is facing its most challenging strategic environment since the Second World War, that Australia's strategic circumstances have continued to deteriorate, and that Australia no longer enjoys the benefit of a 10-year window of strategic warning time for conflict.

s6(a), s6(b)(i)

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s6(a), s6(b)(i)

*Policy Branch, Development Branch
July 2024*

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s6(a)

International Branch, December 2024

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[If raised]: Talking Points

- s6(a)
-
-

Current Status

- Ministers have directed officials to assess the feasibility of potential Pillar II participation. Formal decisions about New Zealand's participation would then be a matter for Cabinet in due course.



Background

AUKUS Pillar II Maritime Big Play

10. The Maritime Big Play is a series of exercises where AUKUS partners test and demonstrate advanced autonomous maritime systems. ADF autonomous vessels such as the Bluebottle were involved.
11. The most recent version of the Big Play, Exercise AUTONOMOUS WARRIOR, was hosted in Jervis Bay, Australia in October 2024. Japan was invited to send observers and this was publicly acknowledged.
12. The Big Play's objective is to get technology in the hands of operators as quickly as possible and to demonstrate the interoperability of the different military systems.

Policy Branch
December 2024