

## **HON ANDREW LITTLE, MINISTER OF DEFENCE**

### **Defence Policy Review: Defence Policy and Strategy Statement Cabinet Papers and Aide Memoire**

August 2023

This publication provides documents pertaining to an oral update provided to Cabinet on 13 December 2022 regarding the Defence Policy and Strategy Statement, and two subsequent papers from March and June 2023 where the DPSS was approved as the government's official statement of New Zealand's Defence Policy.

The pack comprises the following documents:

- Cabinet minute: *Oral Item - Defence Policy and Strategy Statement: Update [ERS-22-MIN-0062]*
- Aide memoire: *Defence Policy and Strategy Statement*
- Cabinet minute: *Defence Policy Review: Defence Policy and Strategy Statement [ERS-23-MIN-0009]*
- Cabinet paper: *Defence Policy Review: Defence Policy and Strategy Statement [ERS-23-SUB-0009]*
- Cabinet minute: *Defence Policy Review: Defence Policy and Strategy Statement [ERS-23-MIN-0033]*
- Cabinet paper: *Defence Policy Review: Defence Policy and Strategy Statement [ERS-23-SUB-0033]*

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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)]
- information entrusted to the Government of New Zealand by the Government of another country [section 6(b)(i)]

Information is also withheld in order to:

- maintain the constitutional conventions for the timing being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials [section 9(2)(f)(iv)]
- 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)]



# Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee

## Minute of Decision

*This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.*

### Oral Item: Defence Policy and Strategy Statement: Update

Portfolio      Defence

On 13 December 2022, the Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee (ERS):

- 1      **noted** that on 7 June 2022, ERS agreed to the Defence Policy Review Terms of Reference, which includes the preparation of a Defence Policy and Strategy Statement (the DPSS) [ERS-22-MIN-0022];
- 2      **noted** the update provided by the Minister of Defence on the proposed DPSS, including that:
  - 2.1      the DPSS will have a particular focus on security in and for the Pacific (including south of New Zealand and Antarctica where appropriate);
  - 2.2      the underlying policy will include pursuing the full range of New Zealand's security and humanitarian interests;
- 3      **noted** the need to engage early with Pacific partners on the proposed framework of the draft DPSS, and that the Chief of Defence Force will be undertaking engagement with his Pacific military counterparts in January 2023;
- 4      **directed** the Chief of Defence Force to report back to Ministers on the outcome of this engagement;
- 5      **noted** that:
  - 5.1      the draft DPSS is expected to be submitted to Ministers in March 2023;
  - 5.2      the proposed final DPSS is expected to be submitted to the Minister of Defence in June 2023, along with the Future Force Design Principles;
  - 5.3      the final DPSS will be subject to Cabinet approval (anticipated to be in July 2023).

Janine Harvey  
Committee Secretary

**Present: (see over)**

**Present:**

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern (Chair)  
Hon Grant Robertson  
Hon Kelvin Davis  
Hon Chris Hipkins  
Hon Andrew Little  
Hon David Parker  
Hon Nanaia Mahuta  
Hon Damien O'Connor  
Hon Peeni Henare  
Hon Michael Wood  
Hon Dr David Clark  
Hon Kieran McAnulty

**Officials present from:**

Office of the Prime Minister  
Officials Committee for ERS

Released by the Minister of Defence



## AIDE MEMOIRE: DEFENCE POLICY AND STRATEGY STATEMENT

### Context

To test with your colleagues their degree of comfort with the propositions set out in the A3 and in this Aide Memoire.

### Key messages

- The Defence Policy and Strategy Statement (DPSS) is the first product within the Defence Policy Review. It will be followed by Future Force Design Principles, which will outline the planning parameters for future capabilities and force structure.
- This conversation is to test some initial thinking with you. I plan to bring a Restricted version of the full DPSS to you for discussion in March, along with a recommendation to commission a Defence Capability Plan. A final version of the DPSS will be provided with the Future Force Design Principles in August, following public engagement and partner consultation.
- The DPSS is designed to be neutral on the force structure choices ahead and describe activities that can be delivered using a range of capabilities. The Future Force Design Principles and Defence Capability Plan would match capabilities to the activities and propose funding options.
- This strategy builds on some long-standing assumptions that:
  - New Zealand needs a Defence Force that is combat-capable;
  - The NZDF needs to be able to operate across a range of tasks from humanitarian assistance to combat;
  - that New Zealand's preference is for collective approaches to common security problems, while retaining our independent policy and capacity for independent action; and
  - the NZDF should be globally relevant and interoperable with our security partners.
- The A3 sets out the key elements of the draft DPSS. I welcome feedback on any of these elements, but there are several specific points that I would like to test with you relating to the defence interests, proposed policy settings, and the three strategy themes.

### Discussion points

#### 1. Pacific/Global balance:

- We consider that the Pacific should be the priority focus for Defence policy, while acknowledging that our defence and security interests will lead us to making commitments outside of the Pacific.

s9(2)(g)(i)

## 2. Deliberate and Proactive:

- In response to the deteriorating global security environment we think New Zealand should be more deliberate in shaping a more favourable security environment, and more proactive in meeting the security needs in our region.

s9(2)(g)(i)

## 3. Deterrence and Presence:

- We think New Zealand needs to be more deliberate about deterring actions counter to our interests.
- Our approach to deterrence would focus primarily on a more visible presence in our region. Through the deployment of platforms and personnel, working closely with partners, this would meet the security needs of the Pacific s6(a)
- Effective deterrence requires a credible, combat-capable deployable force operating across a range of tasks and theatres. Therefore operating across the full spectrum of conflict indicates the flexibility of NZDF to be both combat-capable and have utility in non-combat situations.

## Background

- The Defence Policy and Strategy Statement (DPSS) builds on the findings of *Defence Assessment 2021*. The Assessment found that Aotearoa New Zealand is facing a more worrying strategic environment than it has for decades.
- The two compounding challenges with the greatest impact on New Zealand's defence interests over the medium-to-long term are strategic competition, driven largely by a rising and more assertive China, and the impacts of climate change.
- In response, the Assessment recommended we adopt a more deliberate, strategy-led defence policy approach.

## Defence interests

- The A3 sets out the four interests that Defence believes are central to its role in protecting Aotearoa New Zealand and that are increasingly threatened by the deteriorating global security situation:
  - A secure, sovereign and resilient New Zealand;
  - A stable, secure and resilient region;
  - A strong network of partners;
  - A strong international rules-based system.
- Defence has a key role in promoting and protecting these four interconnected interests: each supports, enables, and mutually reinforces the others.
- They are a subset of our wider national security interests (under development by DPMC as part of the National Security Strategy), which cover the full range of New Zealand's security and wellbeing.

## Policy settings

- Our policy needs to adapt in response to the increased threat to our interests

s9(2)(g)(i)

- We need to emphasise purposeful and deliberate actions to shape our security environment across the span of Defence activities. This means being more proactive and taking the initiative where appropriate.
- This may mean being more present and active in the geographic spaces that matter to us. [REDACTED] s9(2)(g)(i)
- This more deliberate approach involves [REDACTED] s6(a)
- While many of the threats to our interests are global and we need to be proactive and deliberate in our contributions to them, we need to have a strong focus on security in and for the Pacific. New Zealand Defence efforts can and do more often have a strategic impact in the Pacific. This is our region and where we have whanaungatanga that doesn't exist elsewhere. New Zealand is not secure without the Pacific being secure.
- Aotearoa New Zealand, however, needs to retain elements of our responsive approach to security issues. We need the flexibility and agility to make contributions where our defence interests are engaged. Ukraine is a primary example of where we have chosen to respond with defence assets in support of collective security issues and the international rules-based system.
- This policy approach reflects the developing national security strategy, which also emphasises acting early to prevent threats to New Zealand, in addition to responding to events.

### Strategy themes

- New Zealand's defence strategy needs to describe how we intend to deliver on our policy objectives. This consists of a series of activities that sit under three themes.
  - **Understand:** Defence needs to contribute to New Zealand's understanding of our security environment, from strategic through to tactical awareness. [REDACTED] s9(2)(g)(i)
  - **Partner:** Everything Defence does is with partners, whether they are other government agencies or international partners. While New Zealand needs to be sovereign and independent in its choices, we need partners to successfully protect and promote our interests. This can be through collective approaches to shared problems or in terms of the interoperability or integration of our capabilities with those of partners. While Defence derives enormous benefits from our partnerships, we also have to provide valued contributions in return.
  - **Act:** As well as maintaining the capabilities to respond to events, Defence can act early to shape a more positive security environment. In being more present and visible outside of New Zealand we can help deter behaviour that negatively impacts our interests. [REDACTED] s6(a)
- [REDACTED] t can also be achieved through sustaining a credible, combat-capable deployable force operating across a range of tasks.

Released by the Minister of Defence



# Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee

## Minute of Decision

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### Defence Policy Review: Defence Policy and Strategy Statement

Portfolio      Defence

On 14 March 2023, the Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee (ERS):

#### Defence Policy and Strategy Statement

- 1      **noted** that on 7 June 2022, ERS agreed to the terms of reference for the Defence Policy Review, which included the preparation of a Defence Policy and Strategy Statement (DPSS) and a set of Future Force Design Principles [ERS-22-MIN-0022];
- 2      **noted** that the draft DPSS is the first milestone in refreshing Aotearoa New Zealand's strategic defence policy settings, and once finalised will be the government's official statement of New Zealand's defence policy;
- 3      **noted** that Defence officials have developed the draft DPSS in consultation with government agencies, drawing on views of international partners, academics, and domestic industry;
- 4      **noted** the draft DPSS, attached as Appendix 1 to the paper under ERS-23-SUB-0009;
- 5      **invited** ERS Ministers to provide feedback on the draft DPSS to guide its further development;
- 6      **noted** that officials will also incorporate findings from further public and partner consultation into the draft DPSS, and will provide a final version of the DPSS to the Minister of Defence in May 2023;
- 7      **directed** officials to provide the final version of the DPSS to ERS for consideration by June 2023, along with a shorter, unclassified version for public release;

#### Further report

- 8      **noted** that the Minister of Defence intends to report back to ERS by mid-2023 seeking approval to direct the Ministry of Defence and the New Zealand Defence Force to continue work on the Defence Policy Review by developing a Defence Capability Plan and a Defence White Paper that:
  - 8.1      incorporates the DPSS, the Future Force Design Principles and the Defence Capability Plan;



- 8.2 articulates the government's intent for defence policy, strategy, force structure and funding.

Janine Harvey  
Committee Secretary

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**Present:**

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins (Chair)  
Hon Carmel Sepuloni  
Hon Kelvin Davis  
Hon Grant Robertson  
Hon Michael Wood  
Hon Kiri Allan  
Hon Stuart Nash  
Hon Damien O'Connor  
Hon Andrew Little  
Hon David Parker  
Hon Nanaia Mahuta  
Hon Kieran McAnulty  
Hon Ginny Andersen

**Officials present from:**

Office of the Prime Minister  
Officials Committee for ERS

Released by the Minister of Defence

## Defence Policy Review: Defence Policy and Strategy Statement

### Proposal

- 1 This paper provides Cabinet with a draft of the *Defence Policy and Strategy Statement* (DPSS) for consideration. The DPSS is the first product of the Defence Policy Review, and will serve as the Government's official statement of New Zealand's strategic defence policy.
- 2 The draft DPSS describes a much more challenging strategic environment and, in response, sets out a more deliberate and proactive defence policy approach. This approach is consistent with the findings of *Defence Assessment 2021*, and aligns with the direction of New Zealand's broader national security policy, including the draft *National Security Strategy*.
- 3 Defence officials will incorporate Cabinet's feedback, alongside findings from further public and international partner consultation, to produce a final version of the DPSS. This will be provided to me in May to be considered by Cabinet shortly after.

### Issues for Discussion

- 4 I am seeking Cabinet's consideration of and perspectives on the draft DPSS, building on our discussion on 13 December last year. In particular, I am interested in whether the draft policy settings will appropriately enable Defence to promote and protect New Zealand's security as part of broader all-of-Government approaches.

### Relation to government priorities

- 5 The component parts of the Defence Policy Review support three of the Government's priorities, alongside this Government's priorities for Defence.

#### *Government Priorities*

- 5.1 *Objective 1: To keep New Zealanders safe from COVID-19:* The DPSS considers the impact of COVID-19 on Aotearoa New Zealand's strategic environment. The updated defence policy settings and subsequent strategy within the DPSS lay the foundation that best ensures the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) can continue to provide aid to the civil power into the future (e.g. NZDF support to New Zealand's COVID-19 response).
- 5.2 *Objective 2: Accelerate our economic recovery:* As part of the wider Defence Policy Review, the DPSS sets the direction for future capital investment into Aotearoa New Zealand's local industry through infrastructure programmes as well as the acquisition and support of

current and future capabilities that will deliver job creation and training opportunities.

- 5.3 *Objective 3: Laying the foundations for the future:* The DPSS takes a long term, strategic approach to defence that will be carried throughout the Defence Policy Review. The DPSS sets out a pathway for the NZDF's contribution to a more resilient New Zealand and region.

#### *Minister of Defence Priorities*

- 5.4 *People:* Defence planning begins with its people, as its first and most vital capability. As part of the broader Defence Policy Review, the DPSS provides the first steps in the strategic planning needed to ensure our people are prepared for the range of tasks expected of them: from delivering humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in New Zealand and in our region, through to engaging in combat operations globally as part of multinational coalitions.
- 5.5 *Pacific:* The DPSS emphasises a focus on the Pacific, and is clear that the Pacific is where New Zealand Defence activities can most materially affect the security environment. The DPSS builds on *Defence Assessment 2021*, recognising that we are part of the Pacific and its stability, security and resilience are deeply connected to ours. New Zealand has enduring historical and cultural ties with the Pacific. This review of policy settings is expected to produce force structure and capability decisions that support our interests in the Pacific, including working to improve the resilience of the region against security challenges and threats.

#### **Background**

- 6 Defence policy establishes the policy objectives that Defence will deliver, guides the development of defence strategy, and determines how Defence will be organised, equipped and resourced to deliver on the policy objectives. The *Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018* was the last formal articulation of New Zealand's defence policy. The capability investments required by this policy were set out in *Defence Capability Plan 2019*.
- 7 In 2021, the Ministry of Defence released *Defence Assessment 2021: He moana pukepuke e ekengia e te waka, a rough sea can still be navigated* [ERS-21-MIN-0039 refers], which concluded that the two key challenges to New Zealand's security interests were strategic competition, driven primarily by a rising and more assertive China, and the intensifying impacts of climate change. In response, *Defence Assessment 2021* recommended a more proactive defence policy approach focused on the Pacific.
- 8 In July 2022, Cabinet approved the Terms of Reference for the Defence Policy Review [CAB-22-MIN-0218 refers], and commissioned two products: the DPSS, and a set of *Future Force Design Principles*.
- 9 Since then, the Ministry of Defence and NZDF have been working in partnership to deliver the initial phases of the Review. A joint programme team has been established to undertake the work, and new and existing governance is being utilised.

- 10 The Review established two advisory boards, the Executive Advisory Group and the Ministerial Advisory Panel [CAB-22-MIN-0417 refers], to support content development, public engagement and targeted consultation, and provide advice to senior leaders, and to me as the Minister of Defence.
- 11 Cabinet discussed an initial concept framing of the draft DPSS in December 2022 [ERS-22-MIN-0062 refers].

## Defence Policy and Strategy Statement

- 12 The draft DPSS retains and builds on many long-standing elements of New Zealand's defence policy. Most fundamentally, this includes that New Zealand continues to require a military as a tool of statecraft to protect and promote New Zealand's interests. In addition, the draft DPSS maintains that:
  - 12.1 the Defence Force needs to be able to operate across a range of tasks from humanitarian assistance to combat, and must be able to act both at home and as an expeditionary force offshore;
  - 12.2 New Zealand's preference is for collective approaches to common security challenges ("collective security"), while retaining our independent policy and capacity for independent action, which requires that the New Zealand Defence Force is globally relevant and interoperable with our security partners; and
  - 12.3 Defence, alongside other tools of statecraft, should contribute to addressing challenges to our interests in our region and globally ("forward defence").
- 13 The draft DPSS updates many aspects of New Zealand's strategic defence policy to reflect and respond to our deteriorating strategic environment.
- 14 The policy and strategy settings outlined in the draft DPSS will require a combination of investment and prioritisation to deliver, but the DPSS itself does not commit Government to any particular set of investments. The activities set out in the draft DPSS are scalable and the future products of the Defence Policy Review will set out any trade-offs required.
- 15 The Defence Policy Review is developing frameworks to support both formal Review products and future decision-making. This will include more detailed planning guidance to shape Defence's operational activities.

### ***A shift in approach: proactive, deliberate and purposeful promotion and protection of New Zealand's defence and wider security interests***

- 16 *Defence Assessment 2021* concluded that New Zealand's strategic environment has become substantially more challenging. Developments since the publication of *Defence Assessment 2021* – notably Russia's invasion of Ukraine s6(a)  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] show that New Zealand's strategic environment is changing even more rapidly than anticipated.

- 17 The attached draft DPSS sets out a defence policy approach and strategy settings in response to this deteriorating strategic environment. This draft includes an A3 overview of defence threats, interests, policy objectives and strategy.
- 18 This proposed new defence policy emphasises the proactive, deliberate and purposeful promotion and protection of New Zealand's security interests. [REDACTED] s6(a) [REDACTED] In doing so Defence is expected to maintain the capability to anticipate and respond to security events and humanitarian crises.
- 19 The draft DPSS is aligned with the draft *National Security Strategy*; the Defence Policy Review team has been engaging closely with the *National Security Strategy* team in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Both drafts provide similar descriptions of the increasingly challenging strategic environment, consistent sets of New Zealand's national security interests (noting the DPSS focusses on those interests for which Defence plays a key role), and both set out policy approaches that focus on acting more deliberately and proactively. A key priority in the draft *National Security Strategy* is acting early to prevent threats. The draft DPSS also aligns with New Zealand's broader Pacific policy settings, particularly the *Pacific Resilience* approach [CAB-21-MIN-0401 refers].
- 20 The draft DPSS is consistent in its assessment of the strategic environment and its more proactive policy approach with those of New Zealand's international security partners. This includes: Australia's *Defence Strategic Update 2020*, the United Kingdom's *Integrated Review 2021*, the United States' *2022 National Defense Strategy*, Canada's *Indo-Pacific Strategy 2022*, and Japan's *National Security Strategy 2022*. The draft DPSS also reflects the Pacific Islands' Forum's *Blue Pacific 2050 Strategy* and the 2018 *Boe Declaration* in its expression of climate change as a key security challenge for the Pacific.

### ***A policy that focuses on New Zealand, and security in and for the Pacific***

- 21 The draft DPSS sets out three policy objectives for Defence that emphasise acting early and deliberately to pursue New Zealand's security, with a particular focus on security in and for the Pacific:
- 21.1 *Promote and protect New Zealand's defence interests in our region, particularly in the Pacific.* Our defence policy seeks to help [REDACTED] s6(a) [REDACTED] spanning from Antarctica and the Southern Ocean, through the Pacific, west towards Australia and north-west toward South-East Asia. New Zealand's security requires that Pacific Island countries are themselves secure, sovereign and resilient. We want our Pacific neighbours to exercise their independent decision making in ways that align with and support our shared interests and values. Defence, and New Zealand as a whole, therefore must support Pacific Island countries in ways that reflect their own security needs, and in ways that support Pacific regionalism.
- 21.2 *Contribute globally to collective security efforts that promote and protect New Zealand's interests and values.* New Zealand's interests and threats

are global, and Defence will continue to contribute to global security through ongoing operations and activities outside of our region, including commitments to peace support operations and combat if necessary. These contributions enhance collective security efforts and keep security challenges at a distance from New Zealand. They also demonstrate New Zealand's commitment to our partners and the international rules-based system.

21.3 *Respond to events in New Zealand, in our region, and globally where required.* Alongside a proactive defence policy approach Defence is still required to respond to events at home, in our region, and further afield, across the spectrum of operations, using combat capable, globally relevant military forces.

22 The draft DPSS's focus on the Pacific [redacted] s6(a)  
[redacted] rather, it is part of a broader New Zealand effort to support overall Pacific security and resilience [redacted] s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)  
[redacted]

### ***Understand, Partner, Act: A three-pronged strategy to guide Defence***

23 In support of the updated policy, Defence has developed a strategy to guide its activities, including operational planning, capability development, enterprise management and investment. The strategy consists of three mutually reinforcing themes to guide overall Defence planning. Each theme contains areas of focus, with the DPSS outlining some activities in support of these.

23.1 Defence will **deepen its understanding of its strategic and operating environments**, including:

23.1.1 expanding Defence's multi-domain awareness of New Zealand's territory and region; and

23.1.2 improving the relevance, timeliness and utility of information on security issues through improved understanding of our partners and increasing the effectiveness of the defence science and technology capability.

23.2 Defence will **enhance its partnerships with others**, such as with other New Zealand government agencies, other nations and international institutions through:

23.2.1 collaborating more to address shared security challenges, such as via enhanced bilateral and wider arrangements;

23.2.2 maximising opportunities to expand our cooperation with our only ally Australia as part of an overall, deliberate bilateral approach to promoting and protecting our shared security interests; and

23.2.3 improving our interoperability with security partners.

- 23.3 Defence will **build its agility and readiness to act** to shape the strategic environment and respond to events by:
- 23.3.1 strengthening its policy and planning agility to enable more effective operational activities,
  - 23.3.2 investing in collective security efforts, that are aligned with and advance our interests; and
  - 23.3.3 Improving the effectiveness of our combat and other military capabilities.

### **Defence Policy Review: further work**

- 24 Alongside the DPSS, Cabinet commissioned work on a set of *Future Force Design Principles* that will complement the DPSS. This work is underway. These principles will come to Cabinet by mid-2023 for consideration and endorsement.
- 25 There is still more work required to translate the draft DPSS and *Future Force Design Principles* from policy settings into defence capability. By mid-2023 I will seek Cabinet approval to direct the Ministry of Defence and New Zealand Defence Force to develop a *Defence Capability Plan* and *Defence White Paper*. These two products will cement the strategic shifts, and provide options to match force structure and infrastructure to policy objectives. The *Defence Capability Plan* in particular is an essential piece of work that will provide costed options, including capital and operating expenditure, capability roadmaps, and proposed time horizons.

### **Consultation, engagement and consensus building on the Statement**

- 26 Given the long-term significance of the policy and strategy set out in the draft DPSS, and the importance of Defence capability across broader stakeholders, my officials have invested a significant portion of the previous year in consultation and engagement across government. The process has also involved engagement with New Zealand's international partners.
- 27 Public consultation, as well as consultation with New Zealand Defence Force staff, veterans and industry, is underway. A ten week process gathering input via an online survey commenced in late January and is due to conclude in April 2023. Interim results will inform the final version of the *Defence Policy and Strategy Statement*. s9(2)(g)(i)

### **Ministerial Advisory Panel**

- 28 The Ministerial Advisory Panel was established in 2022 [CAB-22-MIN-0417 refers], and reviewed successive versions of the draft DPSS. Its feedback has been incorporated into the draft text.

### **Other Government agencies**

- 29 An Executive Advisory Group provides Tier 1 advice to the Chief Executives of Defence on the direction and content of the Defence Policy Review. Government agency consultation has primarily focused on key defence stakeholders. These are: the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Government Communications Security Bureau, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, the Ministry for Primary Industries, New Zealand Customs Service, the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service, New Zealand Police, and the Treasury.

### **International partner views**

- 30 The Defence Policy Review team has engaged with international security partners across the development of the draft *Defence Policy and Strategy Statement*, [REDACTED] s9(2)(g)(i)

- 31 [REDACTED] s6(b)(i)

- 32 Engagement with Pacific Island country partners on the draft *Defence Policy and Strategy Statement* has been launched and will continue through the first quarter of 2023 via in-person meetings, Post tasking, and video teleconferencing.

### **Financial Implications**

- 33 There are no direct financial implications of the draft DPSS. Staffing of the programme has been financed through Vote Defence and Defence Force baseline. Future elements of the Defence Policy Review will address investment options in Defence.

### **Other implications**

- 34 There are no legislative, gender, disability, climate change, or human rights implications resulting from the draft DPSS.

### **Cabinet paper consultation**

- 35 Consultation on the DPSS and the wider Defence Policy Review programme has been outlined in paragraphs 26 – 32 above.
- 36 This Cabinet paper has been consulted with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (National Security Group and Policy Advisory Group), Department of Conservation, the Government Communications Security Bureau, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Ministry for the Environment, the Ministry for Primary Industries, the Ministry for Pacific Peoples, New Zealand Customs Service, New Zealand Security Intelligence Service, New Zealand Police, the Public Service Commission, Te Puni Kokiri and the Treasury.



- 37 The Executive Advisory Group and Ministerial Advisory Panel have been provided with copies of this Cabinet paper for information.

### Future Decisions

- 38 Following Cabinet discussion of the draft DPSS, Ministers' feedback will be incorporated, along with input from partners and public engagement. I am expecting the final version of the DPSS in May this year, and will seek Cabinet approval soon after. At that time approval will also be sought to publish a shorter, unclassified version of the DPSS.

- 39 I will also seek approval from Cabinet by mid-2023:

- 39.1 for a set of *Future Force Design Principles* to inform force structure planning;
- 39.2 to commission a *Defence Capability Plan* that provides a costed force, including capital and operating expenditure, capability roadmaps, indicative funding and proposed time horizons;
- 39.3 to commission a *Defence White Paper* that incorporates the DPSS, the *Future Force Design Principles* and the *Defence Capability Plan*, and articulates Government's intent for defence policy, strategy, force structure and funding.

### Proactive Release

- 40 I intend to proactively release this paper and its associated minute following the public release of the DPSS in 2023.

### Recommendations

The Minister of Defence recommends that the Committee:

#### Defence Policy and Strategy Statement

- 1 **note** that in June 2022 Cabinet agreed to Terms of Reference for the Defence Policy Review, which included the preparation of a *Defence Policy and Strategy Statement* (DPSS) and a set of *Future Force Design Principles* [CAB-20-MIN-0365 refers];
- 2 **note** the draft DPSS is the first milestone in refreshing Aotearoa New Zealand's strategic defence policy settings, and once finalised will be the Government's official statement of New Zealand's defence policy;
- 3 **note** Defence officials have developed the draft DPSS in consultation with government agencies, drawing on views of international partners, academics, and domestic industry;
- 4 **discuss** the draft DPSS, attached as Appendix 1;
- 5 **provide** feedback on the draft DPSS to guide its further development;
- 6 **note** officials will also incorporate findings from further public and partner consultation into the draft and will provide a final version of the DPSS to me in May 2023;

- 7 **direct** officials to provide the final version of the DPSS for Cabinet consideration by June 2023, along with a shorter, unclassified version for public release;

**Further work**

- 8 **note** that Cabinet will be asked by mid-2023 to direct the Ministry of Defence and New Zealand Defence Force to continue work on the Defence Policy Review by developing a *Defence Capability Plan* and a *Defence White Paper* that incorporates the DPSS, the *Future Force Design Principles* and the *Defence Capability Plan*, and articulates Government's intent for defence policy, strategy, force structure and funding.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Andrew Little

**MINISTER OF DEFENCE**

Released by the Minister of Defence



# Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee

## Minute of Decision

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### Defence Policy Review: Defence Policy and Strategy Statement

Portfolio      Defence

On 21 June 2023, the Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee (ERS):

- 1      **noted** that:
  - 1.1      on 7 June 2022, ERS agreed to the terms of reference for the Defence Policy Review, which included the preparation of a Defence Policy and Strategy Statement (DPSS) and a set of Future Force Design Principles [ERS-23-MIN-0009];
  - 1.2      on 13 March 2023, ERS directed officials to provide the final version of the DPSS to ERS for consideration by June 2023, along with a shorter, unclassified version for public release [ERS-23-MIN-0009];
- 2      **noted** that a final DPSS, together with a version of the DPSS for public release, have been prepared;
- 3      **agreed** that the full DPSS, attached as Appendix 1 to the paper under ERS-23-SUB-0033, be the government's official statement of New Zealand's defence policy and strategy settings, subject to paragraph 6 below;
- 4      **noted** that the DPSS will provide guidance for defence planning, operations and activities;
- 5      **agreed** that the text of the DPSS prepared for public release, attached as Appendix 2 to the paper under ERS-23-SUB-0033, be released, subject to paragraph 6 below;
- 6      **authorised** the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Minister of Foreign Affairs to approve the final content of the DPSS and the timing of its release and sequencing with other national security products.

Janine Harvey  
Committee Secretary

**Present: (see over)**

**Present:**

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins (Chair)  
Hon Kelvin Davis  
Hon Grant Robertson  
Hon Damien O'Connor  
Hon Andrew Little  
Hon David Parker  
Hon Nanaia Mahuta  
Hon Ginny Andersen

**Officials present from:**

Office of the Prime Minister  
Officials Committee for ERS

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Office of the Minister of Defence

Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee

## **Defence Policy Review: Defence Policy and Strategy Statement**

### **Proposal**

- 1 This paper seeks Cabinet agreement on the final *Defence Policy and Strategy Statement* (DPSS), and a version of the DPSS prepared for public release [ERS-23-MIN-0009 refers]. The DPSS is the first product of the Defence Policy Review, and will serve as the Government's official statement of New Zealand's strategic defence policy.
- 2 This paper also provides an update on the consultation and engagement undertaken as part of the Defence Policy Review process.
- 3 This paper should be read alongside the paper to Cabinet regarding the *Future Force Design Principles* (FFDP).

### **Relation to government and Minister priorities**

- 4 The DPSS supports the Government's objective of laying the foundations for the future by considering how best to use and design the NZDF to respond to a deteriorating strategic environment and the effects of climate change. It sets out a pathway for the NZDF's contribution to a more resilient New Zealand and region.
- 5 It also supports the Minister of Defence's priorities, in recognising the importance of *people*, and provides a clear focus on supporting our interests in the *Pacific*, including working to improve the resilience of the region against security challenges.

### **Executive Summary**

- 6 The primary value of Defence lies in its contribution to New Zealand's national security. New Zealand's wellbeing and prosperity depend on protecting ourselves from threats at home and in the wider region, while advancing our interests globally.
- 7 In July 2022, Cabinet approved the Terms of Reference for the Defence Policy Review [CAB-22-MIN-0218 refers], and commissioned the development of the DPSS and FFDP as the first two products. The Review enables the delivery of a long-term strategic approach for New Zealand's defence by developing options for Government on defence policy, strategy, capability and resourcing.
- 8 *Defence Assessment 2021* sets out a much more challenging strategic environment for New Zealand [CAB-21-MIN-0439 refers]. The DPSS builds on the findings of *Defence Assessment 2021*, and determines a more deliberate and proactive strategic defence policy approach that

emphasises acting early and deliberately to pursue New Zealand's security, with a particular focus on security in and for the Pacific.

- 9 Ministers have reviewed the strategic concepts underpinning the DPSS [ERS-22-MIN-0062 refers], and the draft DPSS [ERS-23-MIN-0009 refers], directing officials to prepare a version of the DPSS for public release.

## Background

- 10 In 2021, the Ministry of Defence released *Defence Assessment 2021: He moana pukepuke e ekengia e te waka, a rough sea can still be navigated* [CAB-21-MIN-0439 refers], which concluded the two key challenges to New Zealand's security interests are strategic competition, driven primarily by a rising and more assertive China, and the intensifying impacts of climate change. The Assessment recommended a more deliberate, proactive and strategy-led defence policy.
- 11 In July 2022, Cabinet approved the Terms of Reference for the Defence Policy Review [CAB-22-MIN-0218 refers], and commissioned two initial products: the DPSS and FFDP. The component parts of the Review provide guidance to Defence to support immediate planning, along with a long-term approach for New Zealand's defence policy, capability and resourcing.
- 12 Since then, the Ministry of Defence and NZDF have been working in partnership to deliver the initial phases of the Review. A joint programme team has been established, and new and existing governance is being utilised.
- 13 The Review established two advisory boards, the Executive Advisory Group and the Ministerial Advisory Panel, to support content development, public engagement and targeted consultation, and provide advice to senior leaders, and to me as the Minister of Defence [CAB-22-MIN-0417 refers].
- 14 The DPSS sets out a deliberate and proactive defence policy approach for New Zealand, with a particular focus on security in and for the Pacific, in response to the changing – and challenging – strategic environment.

## Defence Policy and Strategy Statement

- 15 The DPSS builds on the findings of *Defence Assessment 2021* in concluding that New Zealand's strategic environment has become substantially more challenging, with two principal challenges to New Zealand's security interests: strategic competition, driven primarily by a rising and more assertive China, and the intensifying impacts of climate change.
- 16 In response to this environment, the DPSS sets out three policy objectives for Defence that emphasise acting early and deliberately in pursuing and protecting New Zealand's security, particularly in and for the Pacific, by: **promoting and protecting** New Zealand's defence interests in our

region<sup>1</sup>, particularly in the Pacific; **contributing** globally to collective security efforts that protect New Zealand's interests and values; and **responding** to events in New Zealand, our region, and globally where required.

- 17 To support the policy objectives, the DPSS outlines a strategy comprising three mutually reinforcing themes to guide overall Defence planning:
- 17.1 Defence will **deepen its understanding of its strategic and operating environments**;
  - 17.2 Defence will **enhance its partnerships**, such as with other New Zealand government agencies, other nations and international institutions; and
  - 17.3 Defence will **build its agility and readiness to act** to shape the strategic environment and respond to events.
- 18 Following Cabinet discussion of the concept framing in December 2022 [ERS-22-MIN-0062 refers], and the draft DPSS in March 2023 [ERS-23-MIN-0009 refers], the DPSS has been refined to highlight the scalability of the policy and strategy settings (Appendix 1). The DPSS is clear that it does not commit Government to particular investment tracks or capability sets, and is explicit about the prioritisation and trade-offs that will be required to balance policy outcomes and funding. The additional text connects the DPSS to subsequent Defence Policy Review products, including the FFDP.
- 19 The DPSS has also been lightly edited for clarity and readability, but otherwise remains unchanged from the draft DPSS reviewed by Ministers in March.
- 20 The DPSS retains a consistent assessment of the strategic environment and a more proactive policy approach in line with New Zealand's international security partners. This includes: Australia's *Defence Strategic Review 2023*, the United Kingdom's *Integrated Review Refresh 2023*, the United States' *2022 National Defense Strategy*, Canada's *Indo-Pacific Strategy 2022*, and Japan's *National Security Strategy 2022*. The DPSS also reflects the Pacific Islands' Forum's *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent* and the 2018 *Boe Declaration* in its expression of climate change as a key security challenge for the Pacific.
- 21 The DPSS aligns with the *National Security Strategy*, particularly in describing the strategic environment and a policy approach that focuses on acting early to prevent threats. Defence plays a key role in supporting New Zealand's national security and in the delivery of the *National Security Strategy*.

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<sup>1</sup> The DPSS defines our region as spanning from Antarctica and the Southern Ocean, through the Pacific, west towards Australia and north-west toward South-East Asia.

22 The DPSS also aligns with New Zealand's broader Pacific policy settings, particularly the *Pacific Resilience* approach [CAB-21-MIN-0401 refers].

*Public version of DPSS*

23 Defence officials in consultation with other agencies have prepared a version of the DPSS for public release (Appendix 2).

24 The public-facing DPSS draws on the analysis and themes developed in the full DPSS document, with messaging refined for a public audience as well as international partners. Key updates include:

24.1 explaining key concepts (strategic competition, collective security), including supporting examples where relevant to contextualise these ideas;

24.2 updating the strategic framework A3 as reviewed by Cabinet to match the sub-headings included in the DPSS text, to improve public accessibility; and

24.3 [Redacted] s6(a)

25 In drafting the public-facing DPSS, officials have sought to balance a range of interests. These include providing a faithful representation of New Zealand's national security and defence interests to the public:

s9(2)(g)(i)

26 The public-facing DPSS uses both *Defence Assessment 2021* and the *National Security Strategy* as a benchmark for messaging on key issues.

s6(a)

27 [Redacted] s6(a)

28 [Redacted] s6(a)



## Consultation and engagement in the Defence Policy Review

29 The Defence Policy Review process has included engagement across a broad array of stakeholder groups, including the public, defence industry, academia, government agencies, and international partners. The Ministerial Advisory Panel and the Executive Advisory Group have also been consulted throughout the development of the DPSS and FFDP. These engagements have been used to inform and test the analysis underpinning the DPSS and FFDP.

30 A summary of the consultation and engagement process across these stakeholder groups is included as Appendix 3.

### *Public engagement*

31 Public engagement for the Review comprised an online public survey which sought views on two key themes: the relative importance of the NZDF's roles; and perceived threats to New Zealand's safety and security in the next 10 years and the NZDF's readiness to meet these threats.

32 Participants saw all of the NZDF's roles as important – at least 50% rated each individual role as extremely or very important. Based on the importance ratings the hierarchy of importance is:

Most important	Extremely important	Not as important
Defending New Zealand's territory and critical lines of communication	Disaster relief, search and rescue operations in New Zealand	Supporting New Zealand's civilian presence in Antarctica
	Peace-keeping and security operations in the South Pacific	Supporting New Zealand government departments in their work
	Contributing personnel and equipment to stabilisation and combat operations in the South Pacific	Contributing personnel and equipment to stabilisation and combat operations beyond New Zealand and the South Pacific
	Working with other agencies to monitor and understand New Zealand's strategic environment	Peace-keeping and security operations beyond New Zealand and the South Pacific
	Disaster relief, search and rescue operations in the South Pacific	Disaster relief, search and rescue operations beyond New Zealand and the South Pacific
	Contribute to advancing New Zealand's international relationships	

33 40% of participants considered China's increase in influence/expansion as one of the greatest threats to New Zealand's safety and security in the next ten years. Other threats identified by more than ten percent of participants included cyber security/warfare (20%) and climate change (16%).

34 The survey results have been used to test the analysis underpinning the policy objectives and strategic approach proposed in the DPSS, and as a review of the policy and strategic approach. [REDACTED] s6(a)

[REDACTED] Similarly, the focus on an early and deliberate approach to pursuing and protecting our Defence interests, particularly in and for the Pacific, aligns closely with the public's perceptions of the NZDF's most important roles.

*International partner engagement*

35 [REDACTED] s6(a), s6(b)(i)

36 [REDACTED]

*Government agency consultation*

37 Government agencies have been consulted across the development of the concepts and the text in the DPSS, including the DPSS prepared for public release.

38 This Cabinet paper and accompanying documents have been consulted with Department of Conservation, Department of Internal Affairs, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (National Security Group), Infrastructure Commission, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ministry for Primary Industries, Ministry for Pacific Peoples, New Zealand Customs Service, National Emergency Management Agency, National Maritime Coordination Centre, Government Communications Security Bureau, New Zealand Security Intelligence Service, New Zealand Police, Public Service Commission, Statistics New Zealand, Te Puni Kokiri, Ministry of Transport, and the Treasury. DPMC Policy Advisory Group has been informed.

*Ministerial Advisory Panel*

39 In September 2022, Cabinet approved the Terms of Reference for the Defence Policy Review Ministerial Advisory Panel [APH-22-MIN-0214] to provide me with advice, separate from Defence officials, on matters relating to the Defence Policy Review and its policy products.

40 Since its inaugural meeting in November 2022, the Ministerial Advisory Panel has met with government agency executives, and undertaken engagement with Defence personnel via monthly meetings and visits to camps and bases. Members have also been actively engaged throughout the preparation and drafting of the DPSS and the FFDP. Their advice has been valuable in shaping these products.

41 s9(2)(g)(i)

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s9(2)(g)(i)

43 s9(2)(g)(i)

**Next Steps**

44 I seek Cabinet approval to work with officials to determine the appropriate mechanisms for releasing the public-facing DPSS later this year.

45 s9(2)(g)(i)

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- 46 Defence officials will work with other agencies in managing the sequencing of the public release of the DPSS alongside other national security sector products.

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

### Financial Implications

- 47 There are no financial implications stemming from the DPSS or its public release. The financial implications of successive Defence Policy Review products are discussed in the companion FFDP Cabinet Paper.

### Other implications

- 48 There are no legislative, gender, disability, climate change, or human rights implications resulting from the DPSS or FFDP.
- 49 Consistent with the work undertaken for the *National Security Strategy*, Defence is looking to better understand the interests of iwi/Māori in national security through continuing to build new and to foster existing relationships with iwi/Māori that endure beyond the completion of the Defence Policy Review.

s9(2)(g)(i)

### Proactive Release

- 50 I intend to proactively release this paper and its associated minute following the public release of the DPSS in 2023, subject to withholding on grounds consistent with the Official Information Act 1982. It is also intended that the online and industry survey results will be released as part of this proactive release package.

## Recommendations

The Minister of Defence recommends that the Committee:

- 1 **note** that in June 2022 Cabinet agreed to Terms of Reference for the Defence Policy Review, which included the preparation of a *Defence Policy and Strategy Statement* (DPSS) and a set of *Future Force Design Principles* (FFDP) [CAB-20-MIN-0365 refers];
- 2 **note** that officials have produced the DPSS and a version for public release, per Cabinet direction [ERS-23-MIN-0009 refers];
- 3 **agree** the full DPSS, attached as Appendix 1, is the Government's official statement of New Zealand's defence policy and strategy settings;
- 4 **note** that once agreed, the DPSS will provide guidance for Defence planning, operations and activities;
- 5 **agree** that the text of the DPSS prepared for public release attached as Appendix 2, be released, subject to final approval by the Minister of Defence;
- 6 **agree** that the Minister of Defence will work with officials to determine an appropriate public launch for the DPSS, including sequencing with other national security products.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Andrew Little  
**MINISTER OF DEFENCE**

## **APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1** – *Defence Policy and Strategy Statement (full version)*

**Appendix 2** – *draft Defence Policy and Strategy Statement (version prepared for public release)*

**Appendix 3** – Consultation and Engagement Summary

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### Appendix 3: Consultation and Engagement Summary

- 1 Defence engaged with a broad range of partners and stakeholders as part of the Defence Policy Review (the Review) process. This engagement has helped guide the development of the Review's first two products: the Defence Policy Strategy Statement (DPSS) and the Future Force Design Principles (FFDP).
- 2 Defence engaged with the public, defence industry, academia, government agencies, and international partners. The Ministerial Advisory Panel and the Executive Advisory Group have also been consulted throughout the development of the DPSS and FFDP.
- 3 The approach to engagement was guided by the following objectives:
  - 3.1 to promote public awareness and understanding of Defence, and the aims of the DPR, its context, objectives and focus;
  - 3.2 to elicit public contributions and understand public reactions to key Defence and security issues;
  - 3.3 to demonstrate an open and transparent approach to the review of Defence policy; and
  - 3.4 to enhance the content of new Defence policy.

#### *Public engagement*

- 4 As part of the Review, officials sought input from a range of people via an online survey open to all New Zealanders. The survey asked for input on two broad topics: the relative importance of the NZDF's roles; and perceived threats to New Zealand's safety and security in the next 10 years and the NZDF's readiness to meet these threats.
- 5 37% of the 8578 respondents were current or former Defence personnel, 31% had a family or other connection to Defence, and 29% had no connection to Defence. 12% of respondents identified as Māori. 79% of respondents identified as male.
- 6 As outlined below, the majority of participants saw all of the NZDF's roles as important – at least 50% rated each individual role as extremely or very important. Based on the importance ratings the hierarchy of importance is:

Most important	Extremely important	Not as important
Defending New Zealand's territory and critical lines of communication	Disaster relief, search and rescue operations in New Zealand	Supporting New Zealand's civilian presence in Antarctica

	Peace-keeping and security operations in the South Pacific	Supporting New Zealand government departments in their work
	Contributing personnel and equipment to stabilisation and combat operations in the South Pacific	Contributing personnel and equipment to stabilisation and combat operations beyond New Zealand and the South Pacific
	Working with other agencies to monitor and understand New Zealand's strategic environment	Peace-keeping and security operations beyond New Zealand and the South Pacific
	Disaster relief, search and rescue operations in the South Pacific	Disaster relief, search and rescue operations beyond New Zealand and the South Pacific
	Contribute to advancing New Zealand's international relationships	

- 7 The results were relatively consistent across demographic groups, with some small differences. For example, women tended to see disaster relief and search and rescue operations as more important than average, while women aged 35+, men aged 60+, Māori, Pacific peoples, and Asian peoples see supporting other government departments in their work as more important than average.
- 8 40% of participants see China's increase in influence/expansion as one of the greatest threats to New Zealand's safety and security in the next ten years. Other threats identified by more than ten percent of participants are: cyber security/warfare (20%) and climate change (16%).
- 9 63% think the NZDF is not that or not at all ready to face its greatest threats. Perceptions of readiness are slightly higher amongst those who think the greatest threats are related to climate change and natural disasters, and lowest amongst those who think the greatest threats are from other countries. The most common suggestions as to how the NZDF can be more ready to face the threats identified involved investing more in defence – in both people and equipment.
- 10 The survey results have been used to check against the policy objectives and strategic approach proposed in the DPSS. The focus on an early and deliberate approach to pursuing and protecting our Defence interests,



particularly in and for the Pacific, aligns closely with the public's perceptions of the NZDF's most important roles.

- 11 The public were also able to provide detailed submissions as a way to further engage in the DPR process. We received 86 submissions from various groups including academics, suppliers of defence services and equipment, and non-governmental organisations. 16 respondents proposed the NZDF be repurposed to become a civilian agency focused on human security needs. This includes providing climate change support, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and non-military capacity-building for NZ citizens and Pacific partners. However, the key theme of these submissions was the ongoing need to develop greater military capabilities to address the threats borne from geostrategic competition, climate change, and cyber threats.

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### *Industry engagement*

- 12 Defence industry were engaged through a workshop, bespoke survey, and one-on-one interviews with 15 industry leaders, ranging from small New Zealand businesses to international prime contractors. Industry participants were asked to provide their thoughts about the challenges faced when working with Defence, solutions to those challenges, and opportunities for the future.
- 13 Industry participants are facing similar challenges to Defence: a shortage of skilled labour, supply chain issues, and increased costs due to inflation. Despite our respective challenges, participants were very positive about their experience working with Defence.
- 14 Industry participants identified a number of challenges in working with Defence. The two most significant were:
  - 14.1 A lack of clarity on Defence's long term needs. A lack of potential pipeline of work looks like makes it hard for a business to invest in the capabilities required by Defence, and to have resources available to respond when Defence does issue a tender. The lack of a pipeline is magnified by industry's current shortage of skilled labour.
  - 14.2 Not knowing who to engage with and, relatedly, an ability to discuss or clarify requirements, especially to better inform the tender process.
- 15 Other challenges industry identified were: a long and time consuming procurement process where high inflation means costs can change substantially during a long tender process; and frustration at tenders where Defence is seen to already have a preferred supplier, or the nature of the tender means that only select companies are capable of executing the work.
- 16 Industry see several opportunities with Defence, including: partnering more closely in order to create innovative solutions; providing support to better utilise local industry, and supporting New Zealand companies work with overseas defence forces.
- 17 Industry feedback has been incorporated into the opportunities and challenges analysis in the FFDP. Greater funding stability, potentially through a funded 1 - 3 year investment plan for Defence, would address the most significant issue raised by industry – that being a lack of clarity on Defence's long term needs.
- 18 Industry feedback will also inform the next stages of the Review, including supporting prioritisation of options in a DCP.

### *Pasifika engagement*

- 19 Cabinet direction emphasised that engagement with Pasifika communities was a priority, and we undertook two dedicated Talanoa with representatives from Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Niue and Vanuatu.
- 20 Feedback was largely consistent with that garnered from the public survey and discussions with Pacific nation leaders. However, some key themes arose as particularly crucial to Pasifika people. They pointed to geostrategic competition in the region as being a significant risk to security for communities, along with transnational crime and cyber threats (including mis- and disinformation). Participants agreed that security initiatives need to

encompass the Pacific as a 'moana,' and protection of the ocean is just as important as the protection of the land.

- 21 The Talanoas made clear that Pasifika communities consider it crucial that NZ is proactive, rather than reactive, in promoting security in the Pacific. This was noted as requiring a whole-of-government approach, in conjunction with our partners in the region. Participants also suggested a potential opportunities to explore pathways for Pasifika recruitment to the NZDF.

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*International engagement*

22 As part of the engagement process for the Defence Policy Review we have undertaken an extensive programme of consultation with our international partners. The Chief of Defence visited New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Fiji and the Secretary of Defence hosted his counterparts from Tonga, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Australia at the South Pacific Secretaries of Defence Dialogue in Auckland. These were opportunities to discuss areas of common interests, challenges, key regional security issues, and our respective defence policies. This programme also included engaging with our ally Australia on the Strategic Policy Review, which revealed strong similarities between our starting assumptions and assessments of the strategic environment.

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s6(a)

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*Academic engagement*

26 The engagement process also included roundtables with academic experts in defence, national security and international relations. Academics discussed a range of common concerns, including the increasingly tense strategic environment, and the need to focus particularly on promoting stability in the Pacific and remaining interoperable with our key security partners. Academics also highlighted the importance of addressing attrition and retention issues challenges within the NZDF.

27 The key themes and ideas raised from the academic roundtables have been incorporated where appropriate into the analysis underpinning the DPSS and FFDP. Much of the academic discussion broadly concurs with the key findings of the DPSS – namely the characterisation of the strategic environment, the importance of the Pacific to New Zealand, and the general policy direction for Defence.