



Future Force Design Principles 2023



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

IMAGE: Three services of the New Zealand Defence Force.



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Whakarāpopoto / Summary

1. *The Future Force Design Principles* (FFDP) will inform the Government's decisions for the development of the New Zealand Defence Force over the next 15 years. It follows the *Defence Policy and Strategy Statement 2023* which describes the approach to meet current and future challenges starting to confront New Zealand.
2. The current Defence Force is designed for a relatively benign strategic environment, and not the challenges of increased strategic competition and the adverse effects of climate change that the *Defence Policy and Strategy Statement 2023* identifies. As a result, it is not in a fit state to respond to future challenges.
3. The FFDP acts as a bridge between the high-level policy and strategy in the *Defence Policy and Strategy Statement 2023* and detailed investment planning that will be included in a Defence Capability Plan. This gives Government confidence that Defence¹ investments will be aligned to policy and strategy settings, and that trade-offs are clear between outcomes and cost.
4. To ensure the Defence Force is appropriately resourced to address the range of future threats regionally and globally, Defence has identified eleven principles and four underlying assumptions to guide future force design and capability requirements. These principles will be used to develop options set out in the Defence Capability Plan phase of the Defence Policy Review,² and will also be applied to other organisational strategies and plans.
5. To adapt to the changing environment, the Defence Force needs consistent investment to stabilise and grow. Using the eleven principles to guide this investment will help create a force that will have an ability to withstand shocks, as well as respond appropriately to more events concurrently, when and where it is required to do so.

COVER IMAGE: HMNZS Te Mana during Operation Crucible.

¹ This refers in the New Zealand context to both the New Zealand Defence Force and the Ministry of Defence.

² For more on the Defence Policy review see www.defence.govt.nz/engage/what-is-the-defence-policy-review/

Ngā Aronga Kaupapa Waonga me te Āhua o te Kaupapa Waonga i te Wā nei / Defence Interests and the Current State of Defence

6. The Defence Force and Ministry of Defence work together to promote and protect New Zealand's defence interests:³

a secure, sovereign, and resilient
New Zealand;

a secure, stable, and resilient region;

collective security through a strong
network of partners; and

a strong and effective international
rules-based system.

7. The New Zealand Defence Force is the only tool of government equipped and mandated to apply military force. Its fundamental role is the generation and application of military capabilities to defend New Zealand's territory (including our territorial sea) and advance New Zealand's defence and security interests, including in New Zealand's broader maritime region, and the Southern Ocean.⁴ As such, Defence leads and participates in activities to address threats to our national security.

8. The Defence Force also supports the wider national security system, as part of an all-of-Government approach, to pursue New Zealand's wider national and international interests and objectives. It is prepared to conduct military operations and related tasks as directed by Government. These tasks include providing support to other government agencies to assist with civil defence and emergency management, maritime patrolling, search and rescue, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief offshore, and presence in support of diplomatic initiatives. It is anticipated that with a more proactive approach the demand for the Defence Force will increase.

³ The FFDP focuses primarily on New Zealand's defence interests; a subset of our broader *national security interests* which Defence has a key role in protecting.

⁴ New Zealand's maritime domain also encompasses our contiguous zone, Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and continental shelf.

Figure 1: Trends Globally and Organisationally



Globally

A challenging strategic environment increases the risk of conflict.

Climate change threatens lives, places pressure on resources and infrastructure, and may cause instability in our region.

Innovative technologies are changing how defence forces and other actors operate, providing both opportunities and threats.



Organisation

Attrition and lower retention of trained staff are adversely affecting the Defence Force's ability to operate across multiple regions and platforms at the same time.

Aging equipment and infrastructure needs to be replaced to ensure the Defence Force can continue to operate safely today and meet the challenges of tomorrow, and to deal with new generations of technological threats.

9. In an environment characterised by change, technology is evolving at an exponential rate. To continue to protect our interests, the Defence Force needs to be more agile in adopting new technologies, including those that will help protect New Zealand and those that can project force.
10. The Defence Force will also need to adapt to a changing labour force to attract appropriate personnel to meet challenges in new areas. Defence will have to compete with other sectors for staff with Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) backgrounds.
11. A more challenging environment means that the Defence Force will be called upon more often, and personnel must be ready, equipped, and trained for a range of contingencies including armed conflict, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief. The Defence Force needs to be able to proactively respond to developments both globally and domestically, while stabilising and then growing its capability and capacity to meet the future environment.

Ngā Mātāpono Hoahoa / Design Principles

12. Eleven principles will guide the design of a future Defence Force that is equipped to promote and protect New Zealand's defence interests. They are underpinned by four design assumptions discussed later in this document.

13. The principles were developed by considering the future environment detailed in the *Defence Assessment 2021*, the defence objectives and ways to achieve them described in the *Defence Policy and Strategy Statement 2023*, assessments of current and future challenges and opportunities for Defence, a literature review, and an assessment of lessons learned in previous investments. These principles aim to ensure that the development of the Defence Force remains aligned to policy as it moves through the decision process.

14. There are two types of principles, fixed and sliding:

- three fixed principles are enduring and will not change; and
- eight sliding principles provide Government the choice of a position between two ends of a spectrum. The sliders can be moved by government in response to changes in the environment. It will take time to reconfigure the Defence Force.

All principles have a role in shaping the future force and apply equally to both organisational design and capability acquisition; both types of principles are equally important.

Systems Approach

Ensuring that all components of capability are considered, that future systems are integrated, and that industry is engaged earlier in planning and design.

Kaitiakitanga

Defence will be guided by Kaitiakitanga (guardianship) in responding, adapting, mitigating, and engaging in response to the climate crisis.

People

People are the Defence Force's most important capability. A highly professional, well-trained, and skilled workforce is critical to achieve defence policy objectives.



IMAGE: Army recruits participate in helicopter training at Waiouru during Exercise Steel Talon.

Ngā Mātāpono Nekeneke / Sliding Principles

15. Given the need for flexibility in force design, the additional eight principles are designed to be scalable – from low to medium to high. They are movable and their positioning is a distinct policy choice. All principles are interrelated and must be used in combination to effectively deliver a coherent force. Each sliding principle includes a specified area on a scale. This indicates where Defence assesses the Defence Force should be in order to face the future challenges predicted in the *Defence Policy and Strategic Statement 2023*.

Desired Policy Setting

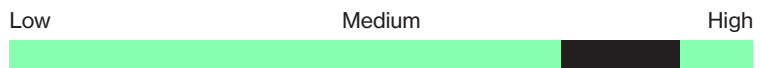
Combat Capability

The extent to which the Defence Force is designed to deliver in different levels of conflict intensity and duration. The Defence Force will be able to deploy in a range of situations, from non-combat operations to conflict zones, and be able to regenerate.



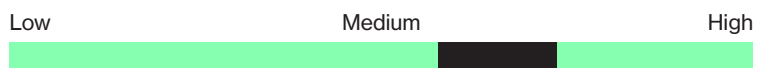
Concurrency

The extent to which the Defence Force can undertake activities in multiple locations simultaneously. The Defence Force will be called to respond to more events in the future, and will increase its ability to undertake a range of activities at the same time.



Resilience

The extent to which Defence is prepared for shocks. The Defence Force will develop more resilience, including being able to maintain defence capability during times when supply chains are fragile and networks (including digital) are disrupted.



Flexibility

The extent to which Defence can respond to a range of circumstances, covering both organisational and capability flexibility.



Scalability

The extent to which the Defence Force is able to rapidly expand if required. It will improve its ability to rapidly expand or reduce its capabilities, and structures, allowing it to adapt to future changes in the strategic environment.



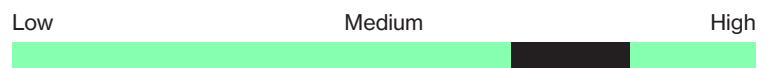
Partnered

The extent to which the Defence Force is capable of acting independently or in partnership. Defence will maintain its level of partnership including its ability to lead operations in the region. It will continue to partner with other government and non-governmental agencies, New Zealand's ally Australia, Pacific partners, other security partners, and industry.



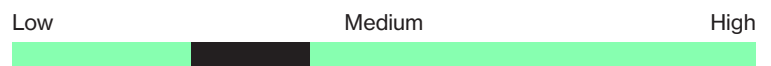
Technological Approach

The extent to which the Defence Force pursues leading edge technologies to support systems and capabilities. The Defence Force will seek opportunities to adopt technologies earlier in their lifecycle once proven, and in line with what our partners are doing. Defence will not seek to be at the leading edge.



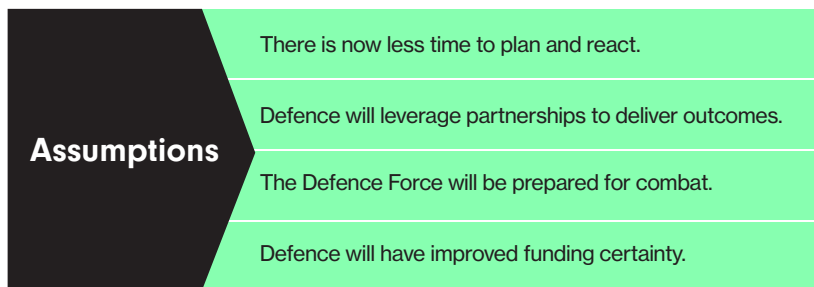
System Complexity

The extent to which the Defence Force acquires capabilities that are simple to operate, repair, and maintain. The force will seek lower system complexity, including acquiring off-the-shelf instead of bespoke military capabilities where possible. Some systems will be proprietary, but generally simpler systems will be sought.



Ngā Pūmāramarama Whakamahere / Planning Assumptions

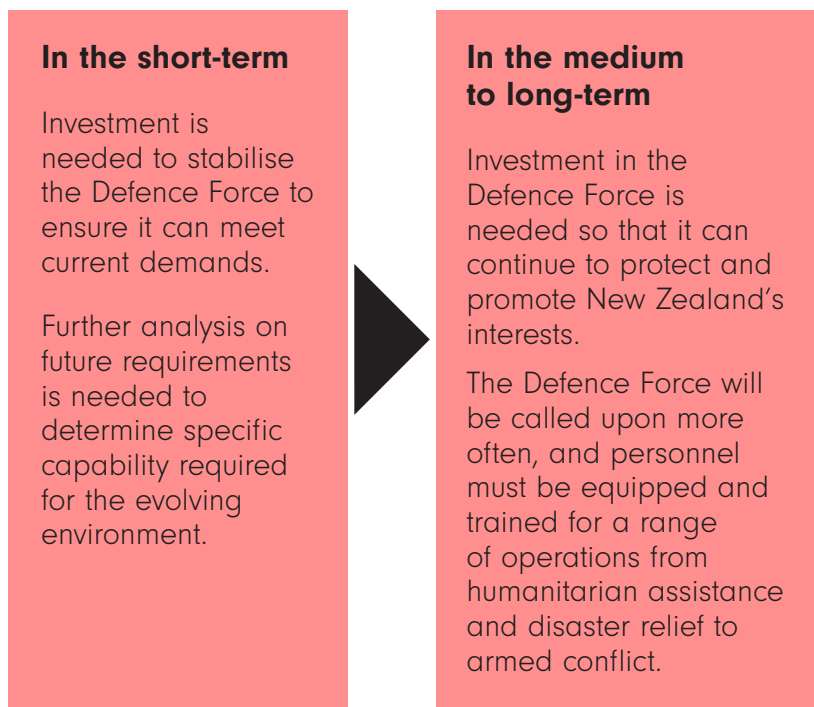
16. The following four assumptions underpin the principles and will be taken as fact in the development of investment planning and policy.⁵ It is intended that they are tested and checked against future iterations of investment planning. Should these assumptions change, Defence will need to re-test its approach to future force design.



Mutungā / Conclusion

17. The threats that New Zealand faces are becoming more complex and more challenging, and the Defence Force will need to be deployed more often in a range of environments. Government will require a greater number and range of response options, in addition to those that are currently offered by the Defence Force.

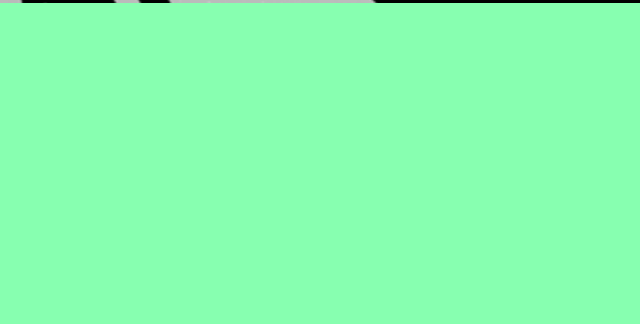
18. The principles and assumptions identified in this document will help guide the development of any future Defence Capability Plans and other policy documents to adequately prepare the Defence Force for the future. The principles are flexible enough to respond to a range of complex circumstances and do not commit to a particular level of investment.



⁵ These assumptions are drawn from the *Defence Policy and Strategy Statement 2023*, and were refined through internal workshops with Defence subject matter experts, sessions with external stakeholders, and have been tested through a range of analytical techniques. The FFDP also takes into account the Defence Force’s contribution to other government strategies.



IMAGE: Deployable satellites at Base Auckland.





**MANATŪ KAUPAPA
WAONGA**
NEW ZEALAND
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE



TE OPE KĀTUA O AOTEAROA
DEFENCE FORCE