

HON ANDREW LITTLE, MINISTER OF DEFENCE

Support to Solomon Islands

October 2023

This publication provides information surrounding the 2021 decision to provide New Zealand Defence Force support to Solomon Islands.

The pack comprises the following documents:

- 29 November 2021 Aide Memoire: *Options for an NZDF Deployment as part of New Zealand's Assistance to the Solomon Islands*
- 1 December 2021 Ministerial submission: *New Zealand Defence Deployment to Solomon Islands* [MOD ref: 137-2021, NZDF tracking 2021-395]
- 3 December 2021 Ministerial submission: *Deployment of a New Zealand Defence Force Offshore Patrol Vessel to Solomon Islands* [MOD ref: 139-2021, NZDF tracking: 2021-398]

This pack has been released on the Ministry of Defence website, available at: www.defence.govt.nz/publications.

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)]
- 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)].

Information is also withheld in order to:

- to maintain legal privilege [section 9(2)(h)]

AIDE MEMOIRE: OPTIONS FOR AN NZDF DEPLOYMENT AS PART OF NEW ZEALAND'S ASSISTANCE TO THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

Decision sought: what am I asking for?

The Minister of Foreign Affairs is seeking approval to authorise Ministers with Powers to Act to take further decisions on a New Zealand contribution in response to the events in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

I am expressing my strong support for this action, noting that a deployment, if requested, would be consistent with my priorities for Defence and the Government's priorities.

I am also presenting Cabinet with initial options for a New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) contribution as part of the wider scope of New Zealand support to the Solomon Islands.

- The Minister of Foreign Affairs has sought Cabinet approval to authorise Ministers with Powers to Act to take decisions on a potential New Zealand deployment to Solomon Islands, should the Government of Solomon Islands request New Zealand's support.
- A Defence contribution to the wider New Zealand offering of support to Solomon Islands aligns with the Government's priorities, in particular *laying a foundation for a better future* by supporting the resilience of our Pacific partners, as agreed by Cabinet in the *Reset to Resilience* approach.
- A contribution is consistent with the **Pacific** priority I have set for the Defence portfolio. This priority reflects the fact that New Zealand is in and of the Pacific, and our security is interconnected.
- Working alongside our partners in Solomon Islands, and Defence and Police personnel from Australia, Papua New Guinea and Fiji, would demonstrate the Defence principle of **Kotahitanga** – or oneness of purpose – with our regional partners to restore stability in Solomon Islands, for the people of Solomon Islands.
- The following NZDF force elements have been identified as possible contributions towards a broader New Zealand commitment, and would be able to deploy quickly after receiving a request from the Solomon Islands:
 - Fixed wing transport of personnel and equipment between Honiara and New Zealand or third countries.
 - A platoon group of approx. 40 personnel to assist the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force to maintain stability, for community engagement, and to provide public reassurance. The composition of this group will be tailored to the situation and range of expected tasks. It may include security, civil-military cooperation, female engagement, intelligence, engineering, and health support elements. This grouping will be drawn from the High Readiness Task Unit, which will retain a reduced deployable capability following this commitment.

- A national command element of up to 20 personnel to provide interagency and multinational coordination at the local level, communications and logistics support, and command over deployed NZDF elements.
- The operational threat to NZDF personnel and assets deployed to the Solomon Islands is assessed as s6(a)

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

- As for all deployments, clear rules of engagement to be put in place. Officials will provide advice to Ministers with Powers to Act on the recommended rules of engagement, and the legal arrangements in place to support the contingent to perform all necessary duties.

s6(a)

s6(a)

- To minimise the likelihood of introducing COVID-19 to the Solomon Islands, deploying personnel will comply with standard NZDF procedures. Only double-vaccinated service members will be deployed, and all will undergo a COVID-19 test 48 hours before they depart New Zealand.
- The NZDF is planning for a short duration deployment of up to 30 days. If it is subsequently determined that a longer commitment is necessary, officials will seek an extension from Ministers with Powers to Act.
- Depending on the final composition and duration of the deployment there may be a need to seek additional Output 5.2 funding.
- Once a formal request is received from Solomon Islands, Defence will provide detailed deployment advice to Ministers with Powers to Act. The options presented here will not detract from the NZDF's ability to deliver on standing commitments, including Op PROTECT.
- As part of their detailed deployment advice, officials will advise Ministers on the impact that a commitment will have on the NZDF's ability to respond to any further domestic and regional contingencies.

Submission to the Minister of Defence

New Zealand Defence Force Deployment to Solomon Islands

MoD ref: 137-2021

NZDF tracking:

| | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Type of submission: | Urgent | Distributed by (office): | Defence |
| Addressed to: | Minister of Defence | For approval by: | 1 December 2021 |
| For referral to: | Prime Minister | For referral to: | Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance |
| For referral to: | Minister of Foreign Affairs | For referral to: | Minister of Police |
| Purpose: | To seek approval to deploy up to 60 New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) personnel to Solomon Islands for up to 30 days. This deployment is as part of New Zealand's response to the Solomon Islands' request for urgent assistance in light of the recent civil unrest and ongoing threats to stability. | | |

Recommendations:

- Note** that on 29 November 2021 Cabinet agreed in principle to a small New Zealand deployment in conjunction with Australia's security support to Solomon Islands, should a request be forthcoming from Solomon Islands (CAB-21-MIN-0510) Yes / No
- Note** that cabinet also authorised a group of Ministers comprising the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Police and the Minister of Defence, to have Power to Act to take decisions on the deployment., if required, including any necessary legal arrangements, rules of engagement and other details. Yes / No
- Note** that on 30 November 2021 the New Zealand government received a request for New Zealand Defence Force support to the multinational security and stability efforts. Yes / No

s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(h)

- Agree** to deploy up to 60 New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) personnel to Solomon Islands for up to 30 days from 2 December 2021. Yes / No
- Note** that the New Zealand Defence Force will conduct periodic flights between New Zealand and Solomon Islands to transport personnel, vehicles, and equipment. Yes / No
- Note** that the New Zealand Defence Force will deploy an Offshore Patrol Vessel to assist Solomon Islands authorities with maritime security from 9 December 2021. Yes / No
- Agree** that officials would revert to Ministers with Powers to Act should the deployed number of New Zealand Defence Force personnel be required to exceed 60, or the deployment exceed one month in duration. Yes / No
- Note** the estimated marginal cost of the proposed deployment of up to 60 NZDF personnel to the Solomon Islands for up to 30 days as part of New Zealand's response to the Solomon Islands' request for assistance is \$0.687M Yes / No
- Note** the proposed deployments can be funded within the existing unallocated baseline for Vote Defence Force: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability Yes / No

and Interests MCA.

- k. **Note** that the overall operational threat to New Zealand Defence Force personnel deployed to Solomon Islands is assessed as s6(a) and that the Minister of Defence will be notified should this increase. Yes / No
- l. [REDACTED] s6(a) Yes / No
- m. **Refer** this submission to the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Police for their concurrence. Yes / No

HON PEENI HENARE
Minister of Defence
Date:

ANDREW BRIDGMAN
Secretary of Defence
Date:

KR SHORT
Air Marshal
Chief of Defence Force
Date:

Released by the Minister of Defence

1 December 2021

Minister of Defence

NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCE DEPLOYMENT TO SOLOMON ISLANDS

Purpose

1. To seek approval to deploy up to 60 New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) personnel to Solomon Islands for up to 30 days. This deployment is part of New Zealand's response to Solomon Islands' request for urgent assistance in light of the recent civil unrest and ongoing threats to stability.

Background

2. A political protest in Honiara on 24 November 2021 developed into the most significant unrest in Solomon Islands since the Chinatown riots in 2006. The protests rapidly escalated into arson and looting across Honiara.

s6(a)

3. Following an announcement by PM Scott Morrison on Thursday 25 November 2021, Australia has deployed Australian Defence Force (ADF) and Australia Federal Police (AFP) personnel to Solomon Islands under a 2017 security agreement. ADF and AFP forces are now supporting the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) to maintain order around Honiara. They were joined by personnel from the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (RPNGC) on Saturday 27 November 2021.

4. In response, on 29 November 2021 Cabinet **agreed in principle** to a small New Zealand deployment in conjunction with Australia's security support to Solomon Islands, should a request be forthcoming from Solomon Islands (CAB-21-MIN-0510).

5. Cabinet also **authorised** a group of Ministers comprising the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Police and the Minister of Defence, to have Power to Act to take decisions on the deployment, if required, including any necessary legal arrangements, rules of engagement and other details.

6. On 30 November 2021 the Government of Solomon Islands formally requested assistance from Defence and Police to work alongside partners from Australia, Papua New Guinea and Fiji to restore peace and security.

7. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) is preparing a joint submission for the Minister of Foreign Affairs, referred to Ministers with Powers to Act for approval,

outlining the situation in Solomon Islands, the strategic context, and the whole of government response.

Proposed deployment

8. The NZDF contingent will deploy as part of a multinational, interagency effort. The contingent will work closely with Solomon Islands authorities, NZ Police, other New Zealand agencies, and the Australian, Fijian, and Papua New Guinean contingents to coordinate actions on the ground. The contingent will deploy with the following objectives:

- a. Partner with Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) and partner nation deployed security forces.
- b. Provide public reassurance and assist the RSIPF with maintaining stability.
- c. Conduct community outreach, including via a female engagement team.
- d. Assist with logistics support to NZ Police and partner nation contributions.
- e. Provide engineering advice to Solomon Islands' authorities to assist with the national recovery effort.
- f. Provide local coordination and liaison between the NZDF, New Zealand agencies, partner nation contingents, and Solomon Islands authorities.
- g. Provide a naval vessel to assist with maritime security.

Land Deployment

9. It is proposed that Ministers approve the deployment of up to 60 New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) personnel to Solomon Islands for up to 30 days from the planned departure date of 2 December 2021.

10. Annex A outlines the composition of the proposed NZDF contingent, along with an overview of the specific skills and capabilities it will bring. s6(a)

An initial contribution of 60 allows the NZDF to establish itself on the ground and respond to any requests for support, maintaining 24 hour operations including shift work. This is a scalable deployment, with the flexibility to reduce numbers once we have a better understanding of the requirements in theatre, and to increase again should the situation dictate.

11. It is proposed that the NZDF land contingent will conduct a staged deployment over the following dates:

- a. An advance party of up to 15 NZDF personnel deploying on 2 December 2021.
- b. The main contingent of up to 45 NZDF personnel deploying on 4 December 2021.
- c. The land contingent will return to New Zealand by 1 January 2022.

Fixed Wing Transport

12. NZDF C-130 and B-757 aircraft will be used for periodic flights between New Zealand and Solomon Islands from 2 December 2021 to 1 January 2022. These flights will be used to transport NZDF, NZ Police, and other personnel, as well as vehicles

and equipment. They may also be tasked for the delivery of humanitarian aid to assist with the Solomon Islands' recovery effort. Air crews are not included in the numbers for this deployment as these will vary by flight, and the crews will not be stationed within Solomon Islands territory.

Offshore Patrol Vessel Deployment

13. The NZDF has also received a request from the ADF to deploy a naval vessel to Solomon Islands from 9 December 2021. This commitment would consist of an Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) with an embarked helicopter, which will assist Solomon Islands authorities with maritime security, [REDACTED] s6(a)

[REDACTED] If deployed, the NZDF vessel would relieve the ADF naval vessel that is currently providing this support. The vessel will depart the Solomon Islands maritime area by 1 January 2022.

Risks

14. [REDACTED] s6(a)

COVID-19 and health screening

15. Deploying personnel will comply with standard NZDF procedures to minimise the likelihood of introducing COVID-19 to Solomon Islands. Only double-vaccinated service members will be deployed, and all will undergo COVID-19 testing 48 hours before departing New Zealand. NZDF personnel will be equipped with personal protective equipment and undergo extant COVID-19 isolation protocols on return to New Zealand.

16. Although the NZDF will take appropriate measures to prevent the introduction of COVID-19 into Solomon Islands, [REDACTED] s6(a)

[REDACTED] This can be mitigated through proactive messaging, which emphasises the preventative measures that NZDF personnel will take.

Threat Assessment

17. The overall operational threat level for NZDF personnel and assets deployed to Solomon Islands is assessed as [REDACTED] s6(a) The Minister of Defence will be notified if the assessed threat level increases.

[REDACTED] s6(a)

s6(a)

s6(a)

Concurrency Risks

20. This deployment would not detract from the NZDF's ability to deliver on standing commitments, including Op PROTECT. The NZDF will have a reduced capacity to respond should another contingency emerge during its commitment to this deployment. This can be mitigated in part internally through reprioritisation of tasks and resources.

s6(a)

Financial Implications

21. The estimated marginal cost of the proposed deployment of up to 60 NZDF personnel to the Solomon Islands for up to 30 days as part of New Zealand's response to the Solomon Islands' request for assistance is \$0.687M. The following table sets out the expenditure and funding arrangements for this deployment. The costs associated with the air and naval elements of this support will be funded from within existing baselines.

22. The estimated cost of the mission can be funded from within the existing unallocated baseline for Vote Defence Force: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests MCA. This takes into account all currently mandated and planned deployments.

| Vote Defence Force | 2021/22 NZ\$million |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Assist to Solomon Islands | 0.687 |
| Residual MCA Funding Available | 6.716 |

23. This deployment is not declared to be 'qualifying operational service' under the Act. There is no impact therefore on the veterans' support entitlement obligation. Should the threat situation escalate, the Chief of Defence Force may retrospectively recommend a declaration of operational service which will be costed if that occurs.

Legal Considerations

Human Rights Risk Assessment

24. The NZDF has undertaken a Human Rights Risk Assessment (HRRA) to assess the risk of becoming complicit in an internationally wrongful act through its contribution to this mission. There is a [REDACTED] s6(a)

[REDACTED] s6(a)

Health and Safety

26. This is an operational activity for the purposes of section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015. As such, activities conducted by Service personnel during these commitments are exempt from strict compliance with New Zealand's domestic health and safety regime. Notwithstanding this, CDF will ensure that the purposes of the Act are complied with to the maximum extent possible using the NZDF Safety Management System under Defence Force Order 71 – Defence Force Safety.

Civilian Casualties

27. The nature of the proposed commitments renders the likelihood of involvement in any action leading to civilian harm as unlikely. NZDF personnel will nevertheless be under positive obligation to report any observed incidents of civilian harm. Where civilian harm reports are received, they will be recorded and appropriately investigated in accordance with Defence Force Order 35 – Response to Civilian Harm.

Detainee Handling

28. Detainee handling is a remote possibility of this deployment. Part of the activities identified in the Australian Security Agreement include the ability to detain persons who have committed or about to commit a crime. The intent is to then hand those persons to the appropriate authorities, being the Royal Solomon Island Police Force, for the purpose of dealing with the offences for which they were detained. However, if confronted with a situation where that is no longer possible and the requirement to detain remains, personnel will consider the risks associated, and if assessed as significant officials will advise Ministers on the appropriate approach.

[REDACTED] s6(a)

s6(a)

s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(h)

s9(2)(h)

Consultation

This paper has been jointly prepared by the Ministry of Defence and the New Zealand Defence Force and consulted with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The New Zealand Police, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Government Communications Security Bureau and the Treasury have also been consulted.

Appendices

s6(a)

s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(h)

Recommendations

35. It is recommended that you:

- a. **Note** that on 29 November 2021 Cabinet agreed in principle to a small New Zealand deployment in conjunction with Australia's security support to Solomon Islands, should a request be forthcoming from Solomon Islands (CAB-21-MIN-0510).
- b. **Note** that Cabinet authorised a group of Ministers comprising the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Police and the Minister of Defence, to have Power to Act to take decisions on the deployment, if required, including any necessary legal arrangements, rules of engagement and other details.
- c. **Note** that on 30 November 2021 the New Zealand Government received a request for New Zealand Defence Force support to the multinational security and stability efforts.

s6(a)

- e. **Agree** to deploy up to 60 New Zealand Defence Force personnel to Solomon Islands for up to 30 days from 2 December 2021.
- f. **Note** that the New Zealand Defence Force will conduct periodic flights between New Zealand and Solomon Islands to transport personnel, vehicles, and equipment.
- g. **Agree** that the New Zealand Defence Force will deploy an Offshore Patrol Vessel to assist Solomon Islands authorities with maritime security from 9 December 2021.
- h. **Agree** that officials would revert to Ministers with Powers to Act should the deployed number of land-based New Zealand Defence Force personnel be required to exceed 60, or the deployment exceed one month in duration.
- i. **Note** the estimated marginal cost of the proposed deployment of up to 60 NZDF personnel to the Solomon Islands for up to 30 days as part of New Zealand's response to the Solomon Islands' request for assistance is \$0.687M.
- j. **Note** the proposed deployments can be funded within the existing unallocated baseline for Vote Defence Force: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests MCA.
- k. **Note** that the overall operational threat to New Zealand Defence Force personnel deployed to Solomon Islands is assessed as s6(a) and that the Minister of Defence will be notified should this increase.

l.

s6(a)

- m. **Refer** this submission to the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Police for their concurrence.

KR SHORT

Air Marshal
Chief of Defence Force
Date:

ANDREW BRIDGMAN

Secretary of Defence
Date:

Released by the Minister of Defence



Submission to the Minister of Defence

Deployment of a New Zealand Defence Force Offshore Patrol Vessel to Solomon Islands

MoD ref: 139-2021

NZDF tracking: 2021-398

| | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Type of submission: | Urgent | Distributed by (office): | Defence |
| Addressed to: | Minister of Defence | For approval by: | 3 December 2021 |
| For referral to: | Prime Minister | For referral to: | Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance |
| For referral to: | Minister of Foreign Affairs | For referral to: | Minister of Police |
| Purpose: | To seek approval to deploy an Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) as part of the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) contribution to the multinational stabilisation effort in Solomon Islands. | | |

Recommendations:

- a. **Approve** the deployment of an OPV with embarked helicopter and up to 80 embarked New Zealand Defence Force personnel, in line with the details set out in the body of this paper. Yes / No

s6(a)

- c. **Note** that a civilian Policy Adviser from the Ministry of Defence will accompany the Honiara based deployment of New Zealand Defence Force personnel. Yes / No
- d. **Note** that we will update the Minister of Defence through the Defence Weekly Report on any changes to operational planning. Yes / No

- e. **Refer** this submission to the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Police for their concurrence. Yes / No

ANDREW BRIDGMAN
Secretary of Defence
Date:

KR SHORT
Air Marshal
Chief of Defence Force
Date:

Approved by:

HON PEENI HENARE
Minister of Defence
Date:

RT HON JACINDA ARDERN
Prime Minister
Date:

HON GRANT ROBINSON
Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of Finance
Date:

HON NANAIA MAHUTA
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Date:

HON POTO WILLIAMS
Minister of Police
Date:



Secretary of Defence
Ministry of Defence

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVES

Defence House, Wellington, New Zealand



Chief of Defence Force
New Zealand Defence
Force

3 December 2021

Minister of Defence

DEPLOYMENT OF A NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCE OFFSHORE PATROL VESSEL TO SOLOMON ISLANDS

Purpose

1. To seek approval to deploy an Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) as part of the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) contribution to the multinational stabilisation effort in Solomon Islands.

Background

2. On 29 November 2021, Cabinet **agreed in principle** to a small New Zealand deployment in conjunction with Australia's security support to Solomon Islands, should a request be forthcoming from Solomon Islands (CAB-21-MIN-0510).
3. Cabinet also **authorised** a group of Ministers comprising the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Police and the Minister of Defence, to have Power to Act to take decisions on the deployment, if required, including any necessary legal arrangements, rules of engagement and other details.
4. On 1 December 2021, Ministers with Powers to Act approved a deployment of up to 60 New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) personnel to Solomon Islands for up to 30 days (*Submission: Solomon Islands Unrest: New Zealand Deployment*).
5. On the same day, Ministers with Power to Act also approved further details of the deployment in the submission *New Zealand Defence Force Deployment to Solomon Islands* prepared by the NZDF and Ministry of Defence. This submission outlined an OPV deployment as part of the overall NZDF contribution.

Details of the OPV Deployment

6. s6(b)(i)
The OPV would relieve an ADF naval vessel, which is currently on station in Solomon Islands waters. This type of coordination between countries is a routine component of maritime security support to Pacific Island partners.

s6(b)(i)

8. If approved, an OPV would arrive in Solomon Islands' waters no earlier than 9 December 2021 and depart by 1 January 2022. The OPV would have an embarked helicopter, which is a common component of the ship's systems. The OPV will deploy with up to 80 NZDF personnel on board to operate the ship and its embarked helicopter. These personnel will be based on board the ship throughout the deployment. The helicopter would primarily be used for maritime surveillance in support of the ship's activities. It may also be used to transport people and supplies between the ship and shore, or between points ashore. The helicopter would be based from the ship throughout the deployment.

9. The objectives of the OPV deployment are to:

- provide reassurance to the Solomon Islands' population s6(a) through a visible maritime patrol presence;

s6(a)

10. It would also have the capacity to assist Solomon Islands' authorities with boarding and inspection of suspicious vessels if requested by the Solomon Islands government. (Note: NZDF would not board or inspect vessels independently, but may embark Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF), NZ Police, or other partner nations' personnel with appropriate authority to facilitate boarding and inspections.)

11. The NZDF does not intend for the ship's crew to go ashore in Solomon Islands during the deployment, noting that the helicopter may touch down for brief periods to pick up or offload people or supplies. There may be a requirement to come alongside in Honiara for contactless resupply, or for unscheduled maintenance to the ship or helicopter. Additionally, in the event of an emergency, personnel may be put ashore for a limited period for health and safety reasons.

s6(a)

s6(b)(i)

s6(a)

Financial Implications

15. There is no additional funding required for the proposed OPV deployment. If approved, this would be funded from within existing allocated baselines.

Ministry of Defence Policy Adviser

16. The Ministry of Defence intends to send a civilian Policy Adviser (POLAD) to work alongside the 'up to 60' NZDF personnel which will be based in Honiara. This is in line with the recommendations of the Report of the Expert Review Group following the Government Inquiry into Operation Burnham, which encourages greater use of POLAD's during NZDF deployments. The POLAD's role is to provide policy advice to the Senior National Officer to ensure that decisions made relating to the operational conduct are in alignment with New Zealand Government policy and strategic interests. This person is not included in the approved defence force personnel numbers cited in this paper or previous papers.

Next steps

17. Subject to Ministerial approval, the Solomons Islands and Australian governments will be advised that New Zealand is able to relieve the ADF vessel currently in place.
18. Officials will update the Minister of Defence through the Defence Weekly Report on any changes to operational planning.

Consultation

19. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand Police, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and the Treasury have been consulted.

Recommendations

20. It is recommended that you:

- a. **Approve** the deployment of an OPV with embarked helicopter and up to 80 embarked New Zealand Defence Force personnel, in line with the details set out in the body of this paper.

s6(a)

- c. **Note** that a civilian Policy Adviser from the Ministry of Defence will accompany the Honiara based deployment of New Zealand Defence Force personnel.
- d. **Note** that we will update the Minister of Defence through the Defence Weekly Report on any changes to operational planning.
- e. **Refer** this submission to the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Police for their concurrence.

KR SHORT
Air Marshal
Chief of Defence Force

ANDREW BRIDGMAN
Secretary of Defence