

Defence

HIGHLIGHTS

Labour will:

- Ensure that the New Zealand Defence Force has the skilled and well-trained personnel and modern equipment to perform effectively
- Undertakes missions that uphold and promote New Zealand's values.

Our Vision

The New Zealand Defence Force plays a central role in ensuring our security, implementing New Zealand's foreign policy through peacekeeping and security operations, assisting with disaster relief and protecting New Zealand's borders and exclusive economic zone.

The New Zealand Defence Force makes Kiwis proud through the diverse work they have carried out in places such as Bosnia, Bougainville, Timor Leste, the Solomons and Afghanistan. They have an international reputation for being effective through their professionalism and their unique ability to show respect for and work with local people.

Electronic, Communications, and Digital Defence

Electronic and digital communications are increasingly important and integral to New Zealand's economy and day-to-day life. Electronic and cyber capabilities also play a key role in supporting the work of the New Zealand Defence Force. As more systems are networked and connected to the internet, it is imperative that they are protected from cyber threats, both criminal and nation state

Labour will

- Ensure that cybersecurity is a key focus area for the New Zealand Defence Force. Labour supports the initiative outlined in the 2016 White Paper to boost the New Zealand Defence Force's cyber capabilities.
- Undertake a comprehensive review of the integrity and efficacy of our Electronic, Communications, and Digital Infrastructure. This review will inform reforms that ensure New Zealanders have confidence in cutting edge security that protects their communications, intellectual property and online footprint.

Personnel

Challenges remain in recruiting and retaining women and ethnic minorities to serve in the Defence Force.

Labour will

- Further improve morale and working conditions for our Defence personnel, given the past levels of record low morale and high attrition that resulted in major losses of skilled and experienced personnel
- Honour the social contract between the Government and defence force personnel who, without union representation or ability to negotiate wages, rely on the Government to treat them fairly
- Recruit and upskill personnel to the level required for the Defence Force to carry out the roles expected of it and to ensure the ability to deploy, to sustain the appropriate level of readiness and fully utilise assets
- Actively work to reduce the level of accidents and injuries in the NZDF by ensuring best practise in workplace safety
- Ensure that it recruits the best personnel available by ensuring equitable treatment of men and women in the Defence Force, irrespective of gender or orientation.

Equipment

When in government, Labour refocused capital investment in the Defence Force and substantially modernised its equipment. It enabled the acquisition of seven new ships in the Project Protector Fleet, new NH90 and Agusta Westland helicopters a rejuvenated C130 and Orion fleet and new Pinzgauer and Light Armoured Vehicles.

Labour broadly supports the capability upgrades outlined in the 2016 White Paper, but reserves the discretion to examine further if the proposed purchases meet capability requirements at the best value for money.

Labour will

- Continue to invest in the capital equipment needed to ensure the effectiveness of its Defence Force, to maximise the safety of its deployed personnel and to ensure its interoperability with the Defence Forces of those it trains with and works alongside overseas.

Future Deployments

Under Labour decisions about deployments will be made as part of New Zealand's independent foreign policy consistent with our principles, values and interests.

Under Labour, the New Zealand Defence Force's first priority will be its commitment to the defence of New Zealand, including the stability and security role it can play in our immediate neighbourhood in the Pacific.

Labour will

- Continue to train and where possible to be inter-operable with the Australian Defence Force and other partners, especially regional partners where appropriate
- Also consider appropriate contributions to UN-mandated or supported international security and peace-keeping operations.

