

Veterans' Health Advisory Panel

Stage One: Application Pack for 2025 Research Funding

Request for Research Proposals on Veterans' Health

The Veterans' Health Advisory Panel (the Panel) is seeking applications from New Zealand-based researchers (individuals or teams) interested in undertaking research projects which improve the mental, physical, and social health outcomes of New Zealand veterans.

The Panel has developed *Guiding Principles for Investment (Guiding Principles)* to attract proposals that demonstrate the research goals of:

- recognising a broad holistic view of health
- having impact in terms of policy and practice outcomes
- being relevant to New Zealand veterans, including Māori
- focusing on contemporary veterans
- where appropriate, aiming for collaborative partnerships and co-design.

The *Guiding Principles* are attached as [Appendix A](#).

The Panel welcomes any innovative research proposals that are within the scope of the *Guiding Principles*. At this time, we are particularly interested in receiving research proposals that:

- investigate and contribute to the improvement of the health and wellbeing of women veterans.

Previous research funding has focused on improving health outcomes for New Zealand veterans, exploring the health and social outcomes of Vietnam veterans' children, assessing if children of Vietnam veterans have a higher risk of selected physical, mental and social health outcomes, and understanding whether veterans (and their whānau) are more vulnerable than the general population to alcohol-related harm upon returning to civilian life.

We therefore, welcome research proposals that will improve health outcomes for New Zealand veterans. The proposals best fitting the principles and assessment criteria will be selected to progress to stage two, which will require a full research proposal.

Two-stage Process

The two-stage application process requires researchers to submit the following documents:

1. Stage One: a brief 1–4 page research **proposal**—expected to be reviewed by the Panel in **March 2025**.
2. Stage Two: a full research **project proposal**—subject to being invited to submit by the Panel – expected to be requested **following a meeting of the Panel in March 2025**.

Please note that completion of the funding round process – from the Stage One application submission to contract signing – can take approximately 6 months.

Information on the **project proposal** format and process is attached as [Appendix B](#).

The deadline for receipt of the Stage One project proposal is **noon, Friday, 28 February 2025**.

Please send the project proposal to the email address for the Panel Secretary, but addressed to Members, Veterans' Health Advisory Panel.

An application form is attached as [Appendix C](#).

Interested parties should read all the attached information and submit on the form supplied.

Funding Pool

A total funding pool of approximately \$350,000 incl GST is available for this funding round. This could be used to fund more than one research proposal or programme. Research proposals over this threshold will need to clearly demonstrate the merits of an increased funding request, and co-funding to support the research delivery.

Research Duration

Research projects or programmes may be up to 12 – 24 months duration.

Contacts

If you have any questions about the application process please contact:

Sara Robinson
Secretary
Veterans' Health Advisory Panel
email: sara.robinson@nzdf.mil.nz

Mobile Number: 021 907 540

Please note applicants will need to get permission from the New Zealand Defence Force if they plan to use data relating to currently serving veterans. If you have any questions about serving veterans' data please contact:

Joanne Hughes
Principal Advisor Org Research
Defence Human Resources
New Zealand Defence Force
email: joanne.hughes@nzdf.mil.nz

APPENDIX A

Guiding Principles for Investment

What sort of research will we consider?

1. Take a broad holistic view of health research, including the physical and mental health and wellbeing, and social outcomes of veterans and/or their families

- Health is more than the absence of disease, and includes physical and mental health and wellbeing, and social outcomes (such as employment outcomes and family wellbeing).

2. Focus on research that aims to benefit the health of veterans and/or their families by informing policy and practice

- Research should have the potential to have a meaningful impact on policy or practice.
- A knowledge translation strategy should be included in any funding proposal.

3. Focus on contemporary veterans (from the 1990 Gulf War onwards)

- Substantial research has already been carried out on earlier cohorts of veterans. A focus on contemporary veterans (from the 1990 Gulf War onwards) will help to identify emerging health risks.
- Research projects could include the whole contemporary cohort or particular deployments or sub-sets of the cohort.

4. Focus on issues relevant to New Zealand

- There are many opportunities for New Zealand to learn from research conducted with veterans in countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and Australia; we do not wish to replicate existing research.
- A focus on issues that are relevant to New Zealand will help to achieve real and meaningful policy and practice results for New Zealand veterans.
- Consulting with the key policy agencies that work with veterans (such as Veterans' Affairs and NZDF) prior to making funding decisions will help the Panel to ensure that investment will achieve maximum policy and practice results for New Zealand veterans.

What are we looking for?

5. Work collaboratively with other agencies, including Veterans' Affairs and the New Zealand Defence Force, to help ensure the relevance of research, optimise research design, leverage funding, and maximise the benefit for veterans

- A co-design approach to research, which identifies how research outcomes will have an impact on New Zealand veterans, will help to ensure the relevance of any research conducted.
- Research partnerships are encouraged, and where appropriate may be jointly funded (for example by making use of the Partnership Funding administered by the Health Research Council) to leverage the use of trust funds for maximum impact.

6. Build on existing research infrastructure and capability, including the Statistics NZ Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI)

- The IDI combines key administrative and survey data from across the public sector into a single anonymised dataset. It is an important tool for evidence-based policy evaluation and research in New Zealand.
- A key factor in assessing research proposals will be that the results of any funded research can be fed back into the IDI.

7. Align with the principles set out in the New Zealand Health Research Strategy 2017–2027

- The New Zealand Health Research Strategy 2017–2027 sets out a vision that, by 2027, New Zealand will have a world leading health research and innovation system. There are four guiding principles for the system: research excellence, transparency, partnership with Māori and collaboration for impact. Given its over-arching strategy, research should align with the principles of the strategy.¹

NB: Te Arataki mō te Hauora Ngākau mō ngā Mōrehu a Tū me ō rātou Whānau / The Veterans, Family and Whānau Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy Framework provides information and guidance on how to improve the wellbeing of our military veterans, their families and whānau. This framework draws on international evidence and local experience to explain the factors that may impact on the mental health and wellbeing of veterans and their families.²

¹ The NZ Health Research Strategy was published on 22 June 2017 and is available as a PDF on the Ministry of Health website at <https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/new-zealand-health-research-strategy-2017-2027-summary-submissions-and-consultation>

² *Te Arataki* was published on 29 June 2022 and is available as a PDF on the Veterans' Affairs website at www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/about-veterans-affairs/our-programmes/mental-health-framework

What process will we follow?

8. Compliance with Government procurement guidelines will be a paramount consideration when making investment decisions

- Government procurement guidelines set standards for procurement for all bodies operating in the state sector who enter into contracts using public or government funding.
- Compliance with these guidelines will be a matter of course when entering into contracts for research.
- The flexibility of the guidelines means they can be applied in a way that is suitable to the circumstances.

APPENDIX B

Project Proposal Format and Process

Format

**A. Coversheet
Principal & Associate Investigators**

Provide contact details (names, address, phone numbers, email) for the Principal and Associate researcher(s).

Information on independent referees will be sought at Stage Two. The Panel reserves the right to use other referees.

B. Main project proposal

1. Research title and project proposal

Provide a clear project title and brief description of the intended research, along with a brief outline of previous research on this topic, and how this study differs from that work.

2. Questions / aims /objectives of the research

Outline the research question/s, the aims and objectives of the research, and the involvement of other organisations, either as funders, supervisors, or as groups with interest in the research.

3. Impact of the research to veterans' health

Outline how this research will assist in generating knowledge on New Zealand veterans that will lead to their improved mental, and/or physical, and/or social health outcomes.

4. Addressing *Guiding Principles for Investment*

Briefly outline how the project proposal addresses each of the *Guiding Principles for Investment*.

5. Research methods

Briefly outline the intended research design and the population of the study. This should include the procedures you intend to use to obtain the data and how you intend to analyse the data to meet the aims and answer the research question/s.

6. Main outcome measure/s

Briefly outline the main outcome measures/standard(s) against which the results of the research will be determined and assessed/evaluated.

7. Funding sought and project duration

Briefly outline the total project budget (excluding GST) and funding requirements for the project, the details of any funding being sought for this project from other research funders, and the expected total duration of the project and funding.

C. Information on Researchers

Briefly outline the background and experience of the researchers involved in the research project. Include relevant qualifications, general research area, experience in fields of study, and their role in this research.

Process

Assessment of applications

Project applications will be assessed using the following criteria:

- relevance of the proposed research
- impact of the research on veterans' health
- fit with the *Guiding Principles for Investment*
- overall feasibility of the project proposal
- experience and competence of the research team.

Applicants may be asked to provide additional information to support applications, especially where matters are unclear.

All applicants will be informed in writing of whether or not the application has been successful (reasons for decline will not be given).

Successful Stage One proposals

Successful Stage One proposals will be invited to submit a fuller Stage Two **project proposal**.

At this time the level of funding the Panel is prepared to commit from the fund will be advised if the Panel has sufficient information to do so.

Stage Two project proposals

Guidelines on what a **fuller project proposal** should contain will be provided along with the Stage Two invitation to submit.

Stage Two applicants may be asked to provide additional written information to support applications and/or appear before the Panel to present and discuss the research proposal.

Once a research proposal has been approved, the Panel will require a research funding contract to be agreed and signed before any payments are made.