



# A MILITARY KAWENATA FOR NEW ZEALAND

Report for the Minister for Veterans

29 July 2020



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Veterans' Advisory Board wishes to thank all those people and organisations who gave up their time to participate in the focus groups, respond to the online and telephone surveys, and share their views on a military Kawenata for New Zealand.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### The national conversation

It has been a privilege to begin a national conversation about a military Kawenata for New Zealand.

In December 2019, the Veterans' Advisory Board was asked by the Minister for Veterans to undertake a national conversation about a military Covenant or Kawenata between those who serve in our Defence Force, and the Government and people of New Zealand. We were specifically asked to canvass the views of New Zealanders about the possibility of establishing a Kawenata here and propose how a Kawenata could work in New Zealand.

To guide the national conversation, we described a Kawenata as:

*a written promise or agreement that binds the parties in a permanent relationship, like a pact. A Kawenata could acknowledge the potential harm that service people and their whānau may face, and the service they give. It could make a commitment to ensuring they are not disadvantaged by their service, in comparison to other New Zealanders. It could also help to ensure service people and their whānau receive support if they need it.*

Between March and June 2020, we heard from New Zealanders about their views on a Kawenata. This timing coincided with New Zealand's response to COVID-19 but did not affect the rigour of our engagement process nor the results we received. The national conversation included:

- eight focus groups with 47 people around the country;
- an online survey with 6,152 respondents, 71% of whom were current or former service people. Any organisation or individual could respond; and
- a telephone survey with 776 respondents, which provided a statistically representative sample of the New Zealand population.

In developing our advice, we also considered a range of other information and evidence, including:

- overseas experience with developing and implementing military covenants;
- the New Zealand situation including what recognition and support is currently available to service people and their whānau, and feedback from some stakeholders.

## Key findings

The following are the key findings of our national conversation.

1. A New Zealand military Kawenata could benefit service people and their whānau and is supported by the majority of New Zealanders.
2. 90% of respondents to the representative survey and 92% of online survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that New Zealand has a moral obligation to support its service people and their whānau.
3. 71% of respondents to the representative survey agreed or strongly agreed that New Zealand values its service people, in comparison to 37% of online respondents. This suggests that New Zealanders value service people more than service people and their whānau feel valued.
4. 89% of online survey respondents thought service people and their whānau should receive more recognition and support, in comparison to 69% of the representative survey. However, 22% of the representative survey were not sure (whereas only 6% of the online survey were not sure). A common theme throughout this process was the public's low level of awareness about the lives and needs of service people and their whānau. There is an opportunity to continue the national conversation, and to build understanding and commitment to a Kawenata.
5. Where respondents considered that service people and their whānau should receive more recognition and support, they were also likely to agree that there should be something in place that commits to recognising and supporting service people and their whānau (82% of representative survey respondents and 90% of online survey respondents).
6. There was a little less certainty about whether that 'something' should be a Kawenata. While only 9% of the representative survey and 5% of the online survey considered there was no value in having a Kawenata, a number of people were not sure. A total of 54% of the representative survey saw value in having a Kawenata and a further 22% thought there may be value, while 15% did not know. In the online survey 71% saw value in having a Kawenata and a further 20% thought there may be value, while 3% did not know. These figures indicate that a majority of New Zealanders would support a Kawenata right now, and that the level of support is significantly stronger from those it is intended to benefit – service people and their whānau. Given that the concept of a Kawenata is difficult to grasp in the context of a short survey, we are confident that support for a Kawenata would increase if people had more information.
7. Online survey respondents were significantly less likely to consider that New Zealand does a good job of supporting service people and their whānau. Only 20% agreed or strongly agreed that New Zealand does a good job, while 49% disagreed or strongly disagreed and the remaining 30% were neutral. In comparison, 42% of the representative survey agreed or strongly agreed that New Zealand does a good job, 15% did not know, 34% were neutral and 10% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
8. There was strong support for more of most types of specific support, with the same top five categories across both the representative and online surveys (health, transition, financial, whānau and organisational support).

9. From the comments that respondents made, there is a strong expectation that any Kawenata should be enduring, protected, and unique to New Zealand, and that it should result in tangible and meaningful benefits for service people and their whānau.

# WHO TOOK PART IN THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION?

TOTAL OF 6,928 SURVEYS RECEIVED

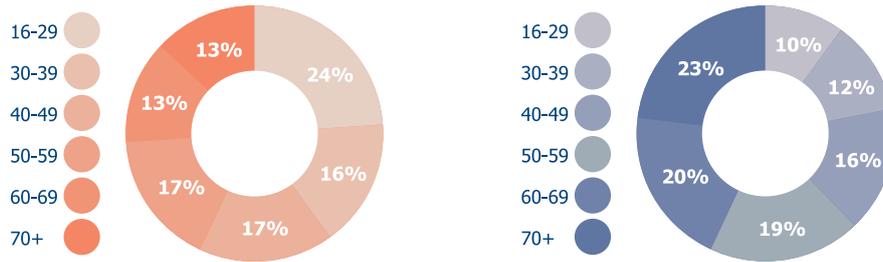
 Phone survey 776\*

 Online survey 6,152

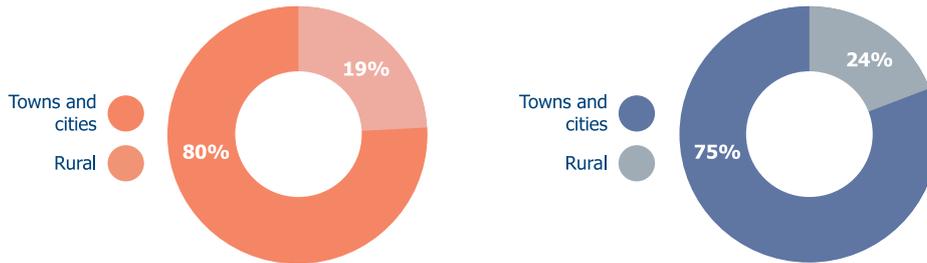
## GENDER



## COMPARISON OF AGE

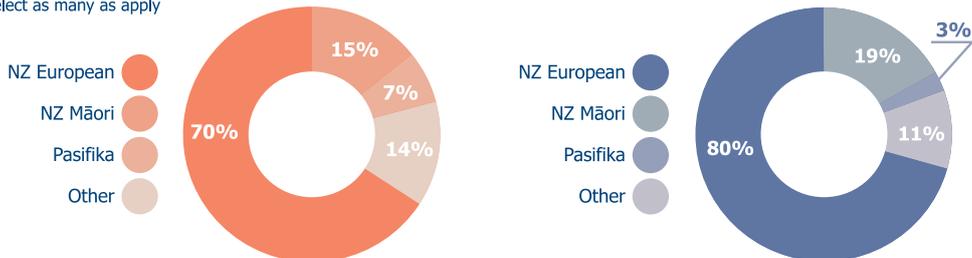


## COMPARISON OF LOCATION



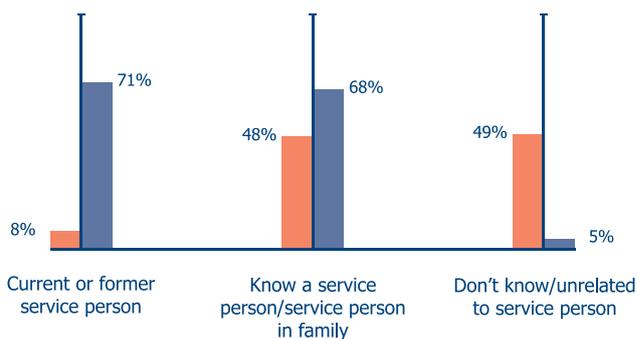
## COMPARISON OF ETHNICITY

note: could select as many as apply



## PROXIMITY TO A SERVICE PERSON

note: could select as many as apply



In addition to the surveys, we also heard the views of a cross-section of New Zealanders who took part in **8 focus groups**.

\* Statistically representative sample

# WHAT WERE THE RESULTS?

TOTAL OF 6,928 SURVEYS RECEIVED



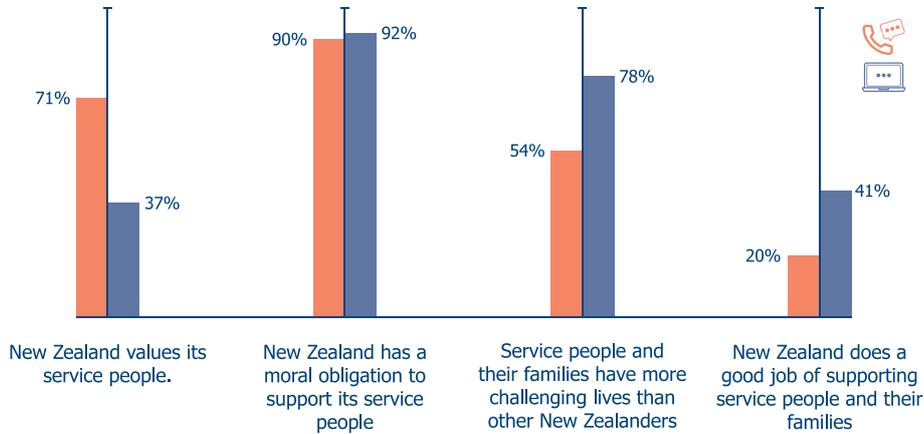
Phone survey 776



Online survey 6,152

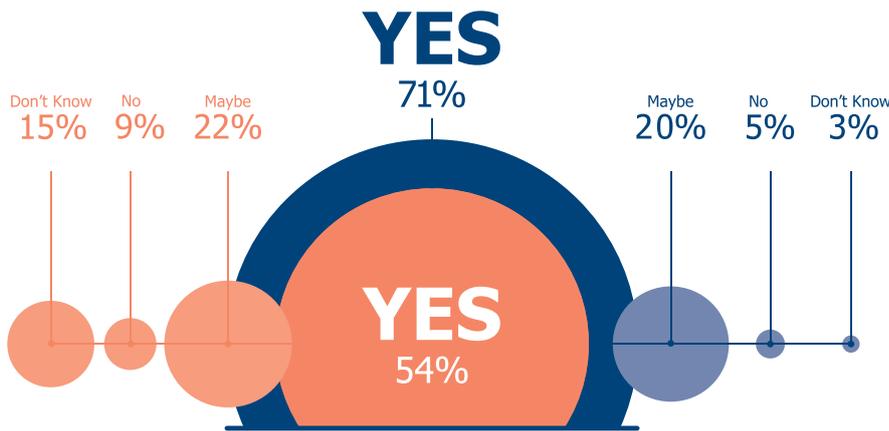
## PERCEPTIONS OF CURRENT AND FORMER NZDF SERVICE PEOPLE

TOTAL AGREE PLUS STRONGLY AGREE



## SUPPORT FOR A KAWENATA

DO YOU THINK THERE IS VALUE IN HAVING A KAWENATA FOR NEW ZEALAND?



## BENEFITS OF A KAWENATA\*

To provide greater certainty in life to service people and their families



To provide greater support to service people

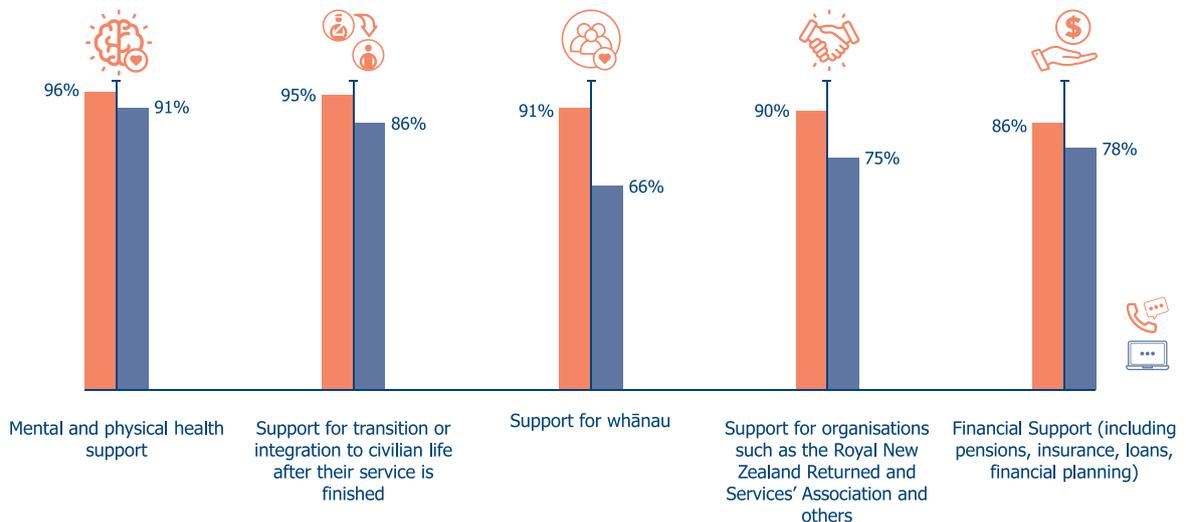


To provide greater recognition of service people's contributions



## TYPES OF SUPPORT\*

TOP FIVE RESULTS



\* These percentages reflect respondents who said yes or maybe to there being value in having a Kawenata for New Zealand.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Minister for Veterans:

1. **Note** that the Veterans' Advisory Board has initiated a national conversation about the possibility of introducing a military Kawenata in New Zealand.
2. **Note** that this conversation included qualitative and quantitative research through focus groups, a telephone survey of a statistically representative group of New Zealanders, and an open online survey.
3. **Note** that these methods have provided robust and reliable information about the views of New Zealanders, including service people and their whānau.
4. **Note** that the vast majority of New Zealanders consider that New Zealand has a moral obligation to support its service people and their whānau, and that most also think they should receive more recognition and support.
5. **Note** that most New Zealanders see value in having a Kawenata, despite often having a limited understanding of what that means and what it might include.
6. **Note** that where people are uncertain about the value of a Kawenata, they are likely to become supportive if provided with more information and engagement.
7. **Note** that there is a strong expectation that any Kawenata should be enduring and protected, and that it should result in tangible and meaningful benefits for service people and their whānau.
8. **Note** that the Veterans' Advisory Board considers that a New Zealand military Kawenata would be of benefit to service people and their whānau, appropriate for New Zealand, and supported by most New Zealanders.
9. **Note** that, independent of any decisions around a Kawenata, there needs to be increased effort to improve public awareness and understanding about service people and their whānau.
10. **Agree** to continue increasing public awareness and understanding about the lives of service people and their whānau.
11. **Agree** that operationalising a Kawenata would require active engagement with a range of public and private sector organisations and communities of interest, to enlist their support for service people and their whānau; and
12. **Agree** in principle that further development of a Kawenata should proceed.

## INTRODUCTION

### Context

The Veterans' Advisory Board is an independent advisory body to the Minister for Veterans. We provide advice to the Minister on our own motion or on request, including advice on policies to be applied in respect of veterans' entitlements.

Of overarching importance to veterans and their whānau is improved recognition of service people, and better and more equitable access to support. Many who contributed to the 2018 review of the Veterans' Support Act [*Warrant of Fitness: an independent review of the Veterans' Support Act 2014*]<sup>1</sup> reflected on the impacts of service on all those who serve and their whānau.

Service people are, or have been, part of a unique environment and culture - one where there are extraordinary aspects to their service. While serving New Zealand, they do not have all the rights and freedoms other citizens take for granted and accept that they may be placed in harm's way. They can spend long periods away from their whānau, which in turn impacts on the wellbeing of their whānau.

Although there is limited New Zealand research available about the lives and wellbeing of service people and their whānau, we know that service can have negative impacts on their health and wellbeing and that some face difficulties in transitioning to civilian life. Recent local research has shown that post-traumatic stress is highly prevalent amongst our service people.<sup>2</sup>

Many New Zealanders are interested in and recognise our military history and sacrifices. We see high attendance at Anzac Day commemorations and exhibitions about our past, including by our young people. We have very little information, however, about how the New Zealand public perceives our service people and the impacts of their service.

We have been influenced by international experience with developing and implementing military covenants. These covenants are one way of recognising and supporting service people and their families. Information on the *Australian Defence Force Veterans' Covenant* and the *United Kingdom Armed Forces Covenant* is included in **Appendix Two**.

These issues underpin the work contained in this report.

### Purpose

In June 2019 we provided advice on what constitutes a veteran and how their service should be recognised [*Interim Report of the Veterans' Advisory Board: What constitutes a veteran and how should their service in the armed forces be recognised?*].<sup>3</sup>

As part of our advice, the Board recommended establishing a military covenant or Kawenata to formalise the relationship between those who have served and the Government and people of New Zealand. We envisaged that at the core of the Kawenata would be a pledge from the Government that service members, veterans and their whānau are not disadvantaged by their service and that special provision is made for those who have sacrificed the most. We also

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<sup>1</sup> The report is available online at <https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/assets/News-attachments/2018/78d091c780/review-report-warrant-of-fitness.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> The report is available online at <https://www.otago.ac.nz/healthsciences/research/biostatistics/otago736118.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> The report is available online at <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2019-12/VAB%20Interim%20Report.pdf>

considered that a national conversation on how veterans are recognised, honoured, and supported, would maintain and bolster public support for the provision of support to veterans.

On 4 November 2019, Cabinet agreed that we would undertake a national conversation with New Zealanders about the possibility of establishing a Kawenata. The Board is expected to report on whether such a Kawenata would reflect the wishes of New Zealanders. The Terms of Reference for this work are reproduced in **Appendix One**.

While we were engaged in the national conversation, New Zealand was engaged in its nationwide response to COVID-19. We were able to conduct focus groups, a representative telephone survey and an open online survey with rigour and independence through socially distanced mechanisms. However, COVID-19 did impact on other planned aspects of our work. We intended to meet with stakeholders about their support for the proposed Kawenata, including veterans' organisations, iwi groups, business groups, and central and local government agencies. Virus-related disruption impacted on stakeholder availability and priorities and curtailed our meeting plans.

## **Veterans' Advisory Board members**

The Members of the Veterans' Advisory Board are appointed by the Minister for Veterans. Board members are:

Leith Comer (Chair), Chester Borrows, Fiona Cassidy, BJ(Barry) Clark, Baden Ewart, Denise Hutchins, Glenis Philip-Barbara and Warrant Officer Class One Mark Mortiboy. Commander Katherine Ayres is a Deputy Member.

## **STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT**

This report has two main parts:

- Part One describes what we heard from the public during focus groups, from the representative telephone survey and from the online survey about their views on a Kawenata.
- Part Two sets out what a Kawenata could look like and include, the form it could take and the results of stakeholder engagement.

The methodology, glossary and appendices complete the report.

## **PART ONE**

This part describes what we heard from the public from the focus groups, telephone survey and online survey about their views on a Kawenata.

The national conversation began with focus groups that explored New Zealanders' understanding of the experiences of service people, the role and responsibilities of the nation to service people and their whānau, and the concept of a Kawenata. These focus groups gave us early insights and helped in the design of a telephone survey to determine the views of a representative sample of 776 New Zealanders, and an open online survey that any individual or organisation could respond to. The 6,152 responses to the online survey included a high proportion from people connected to the services – including current or former service people, their whānau and wider networks.

This approach provided us with three sets of information to guide our advice:

- qualitative information from the focus groups;
- quantitative and qualitative information from a group that is statistically representative of all New Zealanders; and
- quantitative and qualitative information from a self-selected group of respondents, the majority of whom had an existing connection with our Defence Force.

Background reports are available which include detailed analysis and findings. The telephone and online surveys canvassed the same subjects and largely asked the same questions. There were, however, some differences in approach due to the two different formats.

Themes and statistics from across the different sources are included in this report. The telephone survey ensured that we engaged with a representative cross-section of New Zealanders across key demographic characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, age and location. There were, however, few statistically significant differences in the results between population groups. Where there were differences, such as between age groups, these have been highlighted in the report. The full methodology is provided from page 23.

### **Understanding of the lives and experiences of service people**

The surveys asked New Zealanders what kinds of things or activities they thought service people did for New Zealand. Respondents see the primary role of service people as undertaking overseas missions and domestic activities such as civil defence and emergency response operations. There was less awareness of New Zealand Defence Force activities such as maritime surveillance and protecting New Zealand's Exclusive Economic Zone and fisheries.

The telephone survey showed differences between the different subgroups across the demographic criteria evaluated, including age and proximity to service people. Respondents who knew a service person (but were not related) were more likely than the rest of the population to view service people as being engaged in overseas missions, civil defence or emergency response, activities in New Zealand, and maritime patrol. Meanwhile, respondents with no proximity to service people were more likely not to be able to identify an activity.

The proportion of respondents aged 16–29 years who could not think of anything that service people were engaged in was significantly higher than expected. This was also seen in the focus group of 16-17 year olds, which was the group that had the least understanding and insight into the lives of service people and their whānau but appreciated it could be 'hard and tough'. The proportion of respondents identifying as Māori and Pasifika who could not think of anything that service people did was significantly higher than expected.

The online survey had similar results. Those who knew or were closely related to a service person had more understanding of the activities of New Zealand Defence Force while those with lower proximity to service people were less able to identify New Zealand Defence Force activities. Very few respondents had no understanding of what New Zealand Defence Force does or were unable to identify any activity.<sup>4</sup>

## Value placed on service people and obligation to support

New Zealanders think that the country values its service people. We asked survey respondents whether they agree with the statement 'New Zealand values its service people'. In the telephone survey 71% of people agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. However only 37% of online survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Some people were neutral, with 21% of respondents in the telephone survey and 23% in the online survey neither agreeing nor disagreeing that New Zealand values its service people. A further 40% of people in the online survey disagreed or strongly disagreed that New Zealand values its service people. Given the large proportion of current and former service people in the online survey this indicates that many people in this group do not feel valued.

The majority of New Zealanders feel there is a **moral obligation for the country to support service people and their whānau**. A total of 90% of telephone survey respondents and 92% of online survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. The number of young people who agreed that New Zealand has a moral obligation to support service people and their whānau was lower than for other age groups.

New Zealanders mostly agree that **service people and their whānau have more challenging lives** than others, with 54% of telephone survey respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing, and nearly a third were neutral. This sentiment was much stronger in the online survey, with 78% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that service people and their whānau have more challenging lives.

Respondents were divided about whether **New Zealand does a good job of supporting service people and their whānau**. In the telephone survey 41% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this statement while a third were neutral and 15% did not know. Only 20% of online survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this statement, while 30% were neutral, and the remaining 49% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Fewer respondents aged 30–59 years agreed with this statement compared to the other age groups.

## Recognition and support for service people

The majority of New Zealanders believe that **service people and their whānau should receive more recognition and support**. This view was held by 69% of telephone survey respondents and 89% of online survey respondents. Focus group participants commonly perceived that by virtue of their service, Defence Force personnel and their whānau were automatically taken care

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<sup>4</sup> Online survey answers to this question were filtered to exclude responses from current and former service people and civilian New Zealand Defence Force staff. This filtering was applied to gain insights into public perceptions and understanding of the New Zealand Defence Force.

of both during and after service. A total of 22% of telephone survey respondents and 6% of online survey respondents were unsure.

Themes that came through from the focus groups and surveys included:

- the Kawenata will only be as good as the practical recognition and support it provides;
- explicit forms of recognition and support for service people and their whānau should be provided under the Kawenata;
- increased support is seen as more important and a higher priority than increased recognition, although increased recognition was also important; and
- people were less interested in recognition at an individual level, than they were in increasing public recognition and understanding of service people and their needs.

Telephone survey respondents commented that the consequences of service, such as separation from their whānau and putting their lives on the line, were some of the main reasons that service people needed more support, in addition to being inadequately recognised for their service.

In the online survey respondents were able to select multiple options about why service people and their whānau should receive more recognition and support. A total of 85% responded that they experience challenges and are put in harm's way when doing their duty, while 72% thought there was a social or moral obligation to recognise and support them. Other comments were that service people relinquished their personal freedoms and rights, there were frequent relocations and a lack of stability, and they experienced physical and mental health challenges.

*They dedicate their youth to serving NZ under conditions and circumstances they seldom control - they go where the country needs them. They often sacrifice family time, certain freedoms, their physical and mental health in the course of their service. These sacrifices are either unique to the military or are unique in their combined effect. (Former service person, online survey)*

*They see some horrible things where they go, and it can change you as a person and how they react with their families and how they view the world around them, which can deeply affect their future in work or anything that they do. (Phone survey respondent)*

Only 9% of telephone survey respondents and only 5% of online survey respondents **did not believe more recognition and support** was required. Their reasons were that service people already had adequate support and recognition, and that they were being paid to do the job. Some others from the online survey thought that service people should not be treated differently from others in society, and that it was their choice to enter the New Zealand Defence Force.

*I think they choose to do a job, and it's a job or career they've chosen, so why should they get more recognition than anybody else. It's all voluntary. (Phone survey respondent)*

## **Types of support**

Survey respondents who felt that more support was required endorsed almost all forms of tangible support. The most popular types of support are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Types of support**

Type of support	Telephone survey	Online survey
Mental and physical health support	96%	91%
Support for transition or integration to civilian life after their service is finished	95%	86%
Support for whānau	91%	66%
Support for organisations such as the Royal New Zealand Returned and Services' Association and others	90%	75%
Financial Support (including pensions, insurance, loans, financial planning)	86%	78%
New ways to recognise the contribution of service people / further recognition	79%	53%
Assistance with education and childcare	78%	49%
Assistance with housing	74%	51%
Discount schemes when buying goods and services	66%	46%
Assistance with transport	57%	28%
Something else	3%	12%

### Physical and mental health support

Most respondents indicated that service people need more and longer term physical and mental health support. This included support that is either free or subsidised for service people.

*Acknowledge the mental health issues that can arise from simply serving in the military and provide free, ongoing support to any who suffer mental health issues. (Former service person, online survey)*

*They should be entitled to government-funded healthcare and rehabilitation for injuries sustained in combat, not just physical injuries but mental injuries as well. (Phone survey respondent)*

### Support for transition to civilian life

Many respondents were in favour of service people receiving more support to transition from military life to civilian life. Respondents called for a greater level of support to make this transition easier, such as providing more support to retrain or gain recognised qualifications to transition to a new career.

*Provide pathways for employment, it's tough for soldiers when they leave the military, giving them employment opportunities would be massive. (Former service person, online survey)*

*A lot of service people suffer when leaving the service with no help offered or not knowing where to turn to. (Current service person, online survey)*

### **Support for whānau**

Respondents spoke of the need for greater support for whānau while service people are on deployment, or ongoing support for whānau if a loved one is injured or killed during service.

### **Support for organisations**

There were varied views across respondents on the effectiveness and relevance of some organisations that support service people. While there were a few respondents who suggested that the Royal New Zealand Returned and Services' Association (RNZRSA) and local Returned Services' Associations (RSAs) be better equipped to support service people, respondents largely expressed how the associations were becoming less relevant to service people, especially younger members, and did not provide adequate support. A few respondents spoke positively of other organisations, such as *No Duff*.

### **Financial support**

Respondents suggested a pension or superannuation scheme that was separate from KiwiSaver, with a few suggesting that this scheme could be based on length of service. Other respondents spoke of a need for easier access to insurance (particularly health and life insurance) and support in the form of financial advice, planning, and management.

### **New ways to recognise the contribution of service people / further recognition**

Specific examples of new ways to recognise service people's contributions included celebrating both current and former service people, better recognising contemporary veterans, creating more events or establishing more public holidays to celebrate service people more frequently than on Anzac Day alone, and running publicity campaigns to raise public awareness of the work service people do. Respondents wanted to establish a culture where New Zealanders can genuinely appreciate service people and their important role in society, so that they feel valued and respected for their work.

A few respondents wanted current and former military service to be recognised more frequently than on Anzac Day alone. Others noted the importance of recognising all conflicts New Zealand has been involved in (including on Anzac Day), particularly more modern conflicts such as in Afghanistan, citing concerns that only World War I and II service is recognised. A few respondents sought greater medallic recognition (particularly for non-operational service).

### **Assistance with housing, education, childcare, and transport**

Very few respondents commented on the need for greater housing, education, and childcare support. Comments included:

- **housing support:** including the need for reduced rates or more affordable home loans; more support to find suitable and affordable housing, particularly when relocating; and better-quality housing at military bases and camps.

- **education support:** including more higher education opportunities for service people and their partners, particularly once the service person has retired; and scholarships for children of service people.
- **childcare support:** particularly while the service person is deployed.

### Other suggestions for support and recognition

In the online survey a few respondents commented on the need for improved New Zealand Defence Force conditions and entitlements such as better remuneration, tax breaks while on deployment, and other benefits and incentives. A few other respondents provided more general comments including wanting to see support that was ongoing, holistic, tailored and wrap-around in nature.

Respondents also suggested that there needs to be a greater awareness of the types of support available to service people, including clear communication on what support service people and their family and whānau are eligible to receive.

### Should there be something in place to support service people and their whānau?

Most people surveyed thought there **should be ‘something in place’ that commits to recognising and supporting service people and their whānau.**

People who believed there should be more recognition and support for service people, were then asked a supplementary question. They were asked if there should be something in place that commits to recognising and supporting service people and their whānau.

Of the telephone survey respondents, 82% responded yes, 16% responded maybe, and 2% responded either no or don’t know.

In the online survey a total of 90% of respondents agreed, and 8% of respondents selected maybe. Just over 1% of respondents did not know, and less than 1% disagreed.

When considering all respondents surveyed, this equates to support of 57% of telephone survey respondents, and 86% of online survey respondents.

### Value placed on a Kawenata

More than half (54%) of all telephone survey respondents believed there was **value in having a Kawenata for New Zealand**, while more than two thirds (71%) of online survey participants agreed. Focus groups also showed general support for a Kawenata. Participants felt there should be a support system for service people and their families and some were surprised that New Zealand did not already have a Kawenata (or equivalent). They thought that a Kawenata would be worthwhile, meaningful, and the right thing to do.

The telephone survey showed differences in support for a Kawenata depending on proximity to a service person. Support was lower among respondents who did not know a service person or were not related to a service person. These respondents were more likely to state they did not know whether they supported a Kawenata.

Only 9% of telephone survey respondents and 5% of online survey respondents **did not support a Kawenata.** One focus group and some other participants were not in favour of a Kawenata. They felt that service people knew what they were signing on for and therefore should not expect

special treatment. The focus group of 16-17 year-olds struggled to understand the idea of a Kawenata, why it was needed or what it was offering, and felt that it must provide tangible benefits and support.

A number of people were not sure about the value of having a Kawenata. 22% of telephone survey respondents thought there may be value, while 15% did not know. In the online survey 20% thought there may be value, while 3% did not know.

## Main benefits of a Kawenata

Most people thought the **main benefits of a Kawenata would be to**<sup>5</sup>:

- provide greater support to service people (87% of telephone survey respondents, 75% of online survey respondents)
- provide greater certainty in life to service people and their families (85% of telephone survey respondents, 71% of online survey respondents), and
- provide greater recognition of service people's contributions (82% of telephone survey respondents, 70% of online survey respondents).

These benefits were also identified during focus groups. A few respondents from the telephone survey suggested a Kawenata could help New Zealanders understand what they could do to support service people and their whānau.

Online survey respondents made some other suggestions including greater awareness of support avenues and what support is available and improving public knowledge about service people. Some respondents in both surveys and in focus groups wanted to ensure that a Kawenata provided tangible support for service people and their families.

*A Kawenata will have to have teeth and resources to be effective. (Former service person, online survey)*

Many online survey respondents emphasised the need for increased recognition of the contribution of current and former service people. Respondents wanted greater public awareness and promotion about what service people do, and what it means to serve. For example, that 'it's not a normal job', they experience hardships and make sacrifices. They sought improved public understanding and attitudes towards service people and more widespread public education.

Some online survey respondents commented that a Kawenata should be a formal commitment bound by legislation that provides enduring support and recognition. They felt it ought to be binding and legally enforceable so that it would not be subject to the political whims of the government of the day. This sentiment was particularly strong among current and former service people. Very few respondents suggested that a Kawenata be a living document that adapted as new needs emerge.

Focus groups added that it should transcend political interests, including changes of government.

*A legally binding contract that holds NZ to account for any and all issues and problems that result from service to NZ. It should ensure that they are supported even after their service has been completed. (Former service person, online survey)*

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<sup>5</sup> People who answered yes or maybe to the question 'do you think there is value in having such a Kawenata for New Zealand' were asked what they thought the overall benefits of a Kawenata could be.

## What could a Kawenata include or do for the whānau of service people?

Many respondents described how a Kawenata should include or **provide tangible support to whānau of service people**.<sup>6</sup> When describing types of support respondents placed the greatest importance on general help and support, mental health support and financial support.

Online survey respondents sought greater recognition of the commitment of whānau of service people and the impacts of service on their lives. They suggested that a Kawenata should include holistic health and wellbeing support for the service person and the whole family:

*I struggled with PTSD and integrating into society [...] I am quite withdrawn from both civilian and service people now, just relying on family, as that is where the support is for me. Therefore, it is the families that also need the support to deal with situations like this. (Former service person, online survey)*

*It must also include the children of servicemen even when they age. My parents split up, and so my mother and the other kids were left almost homeless. Even though we were affected by the military, we did not get any compensation or support. Even though my father was a good soldier, he ended up messed up because of his experiences serving in Malaya, which affected me and the rest of the family. (Phone survey respondent)*

Other comments about specific forms of support for whānau echoed the support suggested for current and former service people, such as childcare, housing, education, employment, finances, and support during deployments. Respondents suggested that the period when a service person transitioned to civilian life could be difficult for service people and family members alike, and all required support.

## What a uniquely New Zealand Kawenata would look like

Concepts of fairness and inclusiveness were viewed as important in a **uniquely New Zealand Kawenata**.<sup>7</sup> Respondents suggested a uniquely New Zealand Kawenata should reflect our culture, values and diverse multicultural society. Other respondents thought it was important to acknowledge the Treaty of Waitangi and its principles and include Māori and Pacific values and culture. Online survey respondents and focus group participants suggested a range of values that should be reflected in a uniquely New Zealand Kawenata, most commonly whānaungatanga<sup>8</sup> and manaakitanga<sup>9</sup>.

A few respondents suggested that the New Zealand Defence Force values of courage, commitment, comradeship, and integrity could be reflected in a Kawenata, possibly as the foundation on which it could be built. Respondents recognised that Māori constitute a significant proportion of the Defence Force and wanted a Kawenata to reflect the ethnic diversity of the Defence Force.

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<sup>6</sup> People who answered yes or maybe to the question 'do you think there is value in having such a Kawenata for New Zealand' were asked what they thought a Kawenata should include or do for the whānau of service people.

<sup>7</sup> People who answered yes or maybe to the question 'do you think there is value in having such a Kawenata for New Zealand' were asked what would be important to reflect or include in a uniquely New Zealand Kawenata.

<sup>8</sup> Whānaungatanga - relationship, kinship, sense of family connection - a relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging.

<sup>9</sup> Manaakitanga - hospitality, kindness, generosity, support - the process of showing respect, generosity and care for others.

*It would need to reflect the unique diversity and makeup of our forces. (Current service person, online survey)*

*You'd need to include Iwi, Pasifika, European so it would have to have enough diversity to make it fit all cultures. (Phone survey respondent)*

Respondents reiterated that a New Zealand Kawenata should include recognition of service, the sacrifices service people made and the work they perform.

*Knowing that New Zealand supports them and gives them the recognition that they deserve. Knowing that New Zealand is behind them. (Phone survey respondent)*

Others emphasised that the family and whānau of service people should be recognised and included in a uniquely New Zealand Kawenata.

A few respondents suggested looking to other countries' military covenants as examples of what a Kawenata could look like. Focus group respondents liked the specificity of the United Kingdom covenant while they saw the Australian covenant as less adequate; one focus group participant in Invercargill commented "it's just a handshake".

One in two respondents to the telephone survey did not know what a uniquely New Zealand Kawenata should look like. Similarly, around half of online survey respondents did not provide answers to this question.

## **Other comments**

Some people provided further comments in support of a Kawenata, stating that it is long overdue, and their hope that a Kawenata would soon be established.

*I believe that done well, this will be a major next step for our service personnel, their whānau, the NZDF, and Aotearoa NZ. (Current service person, online survey)*

Some respondents and focus group participants raised concerns with the name 'Kawenata', noting that not everyone understands what it means, and suggested that a different name be chosen.

Many people made comments in the online survey about the definition of a veteran and the eligibility and entitlement of specific groups to support and recognition under the Veterans' Support Act 2014 or by Veterans' Affairs New Zealand. Others commented that both regulars and reservists in the New Zealand Defence Force should be included in a Kawenata.

A few respondents thought that other groups such as emergency services should also receive recognition and support.

## PART TWO

This part describes the content and form of a potential Kawenata, and the results of stakeholder engagement.

### What a Kawenata could look like

The Kawenata should provide an enduring, principle-based framework for guiding future actions. One respondent suggested that we:

*Make the 'Kawenata' the ribbon that ties the support / actions together. (Former service person, online survey)*

It will need to be written for our people, our values and our circumstances.

The text of the Kawenata itself – the written promise - should be standalone and easy to understand and remember. While it needs to be adaptable for different purposes and users, there should be no leeway for misinterpretation. It must resonate for all New Zealanders and speak to our hearts and minds.

The Kawenata would draw on the United Kingdom and Australian covenants but be adapted to New Zealand's own culture and experiences. When we asked what it would be important to reflect or include in a uniquely New Zealand Kawenata, about half of people did not respond. This suggests it may be a challenge to settle on what would make a uniquely New Zealand Kawenata, and the need for further conversation. Where people did respond, they were most likely to suggest reflecting our cultural diversity, aspects of Māori and Pacific culture and language, and the diversity and culture of service people and the wider Defence Force.

It is important to us that the Kawenata celebrates the spirit of service to our nation and is positive. It should not be grievance driven or imply that service people and their whānau deserve more or better than other New Zealand citizens.

### Objectives of the Kawenata

We asked people what they saw as the potential benefits of a Kawenata. Most of them agreed with the three benefits suggested, which were to provide:

- greater support to service people;
- certainty in life to service people and their whānau, and
- recognition of service peoples' contributions.

Other benefits suggested included increasing public awareness and the profile of service people, clarifying the responsibilities of New Zealanders towards our service people, and publicising the avenues of support for service people.

The Kawenata should have clear objectives, and these should be expressed if the Kawenata is legislated. We suggest that draft objectives be developed, drawing on the views expressed to date in the national conversation, and that these be tested with stakeholders.

### Parties to the Kawenata

The proposal we took out for consultation was that the Kawenata could be *between service people and their families, the Government and the people of New Zealand*. These three parties

were specified in our Terms of Reference, and this approach is similar to that used in the United Kingdom covenant. There are no parties in the Australian covenant.

We have given further consideration to whether there should be parties to the Kawenata. We consider that specifying the parties would be powerful and symbolic of the interdependent relationship that exists now and into the future. It would also help ensure that responsibilities are clear. However, there is a question about whether service people and their whānau should be considered a party to the agreement, or beneficiaries of it. If you decide to proceed with development of a Kawenata, we suggest that this issue be tested with stakeholders in the next phase of work.

### **Text of the Kawenata**

We consider the text of any Kawenata should recognise the value that New Zealand receives from its service people and their whānau and record the parties' commitments and obligations. We anticipate that the following aspects will need to be reflected in the text of any Kawenata:

1. recognition of the contribution our service people make to defend our sovereignty and way of life;
2. acknowledgement of the impact this has on service people and their whānau, including how they are placed in harm's way;
3. a commitment to ensuring they are not disadvantaged by their service, in comparison to other New Zealanders; and
4. a commitment to providing support and care for our service people and their whānau.

Our research and consultation suggest that the first three of these aspects will be understood and supported within New Zealand by a wide range of individuals and organisations.

The fourth aspect is likely to be supported at a conceptual level, but as found in our conversations to date, there will be questions about what this means in practice.

The text of the Kawenata itself, the Parties and overall objectives are all important. However, they are only part of what is needed to give life and meaning to a Kawenata.

### **Offering recognition to those who have served**

We were asked to advise on how a Kawenata could offer recognition to those who have served. Online survey respondents, 71% of whom were current or former service people, were much less likely to suggest that we need new ways to recognise the contribution of service people (53%) than mental and physical health support (91%) or transition support (86%).

We consider that there is unlikely to be much appetite, in isolation, for ceremonial forms of individual recognition such as the pins and certificates offered under the Australian covenant. Australia has also established a business discount scheme. The New Zealand Defence Force already operates a similar scheme for service people and their whānau, although this could be promoted and expanded under the influence of a Kawenata.

Instead of individual recognition, we suggest that the first priority is to focus on public awareness raising, in order to increase New Zealanders' understanding of the experiences and needs of service people and their whānau, and to promote a Kawenata. Releasing our consultation findings would contribute to this cause and help continue the national conversation. There does, however, need to be more New Zealand research into the lives and needs of service people and their whānau to ensure evidence-based data and a fit-for-purpose response.

## **Supporting the Parties to the Kawenata**

We like the approach used in the United Kingdom, where a wide range of organisations and groups can enter into agreements or make pledges to support and implement their covenant.

In New Zealand, this would require active promotion of the Kawenata and engagement with a range of public and private sector organisations and communities of interest. A support infrastructure and resources would be needed.

We expect that iwi, businesses, Non-Government Organisations, local authorities, community groups and other bodies may choose to make a pledge to the Kawenata, join a government-led programme of initiatives or create initiatives of their own which support the Kawenata.

## **Issues that require further work**

Respondents anticipate that additional tangible and meaningful government support will be provided for service people and their whānau under the Kawenata. While there was some difference in opinion between the representative and online surveys, support for physical and mental health, and for transition to civilian life, both ranked as high priorities for respondents.

Should you decide to proceed further with a Kawenata, this significant issue will require more consideration.

Oversight, monitoring and reporting arrangements for the Kawenata will also need to be considered.

## **Form of a Kawenata**

New Zealanders want any Kawenata to have status and real impact (i.e. to have 'teeth'). It also needs to be enduring and transcend political interests, including changes of government.

An agreement such as the Kawenata can be made without legislation. For example, it could be an aspirational statement, a government policy commitment, or a joint agreement such as a memorandum of understanding. A Kawenata could also start out as a policy commitment, which could be legislated after additional public engagement and bedding in of the policy.

While we did not specifically survey people about whether New Zealand should legislate its Kawenata, respondents expressed concern about follow-through and holding the Crown to account. A number indicated for the Kawenata to be effective it would need to be binding on the Crown and included in legislation. Very few respondents suggested that a Kawenata be a living document that is adapted as new needs emerge.

While different countries have taken different approaches to the form of their covenants, the United Kingdom and Australia have ultimately decided to legislate their covenants. The United Kingdom already has legislated oversight, monitoring and reporting arrangements for its armed forces covenant. It recently agreed to further incorporate the covenant into law.

If you decide to proceed with developing a Kawenata, more work would be required on its form, including whether the Kawenata should ultimately be legislated. Consideration would have to be given to whether any legislation should include the text of the Kawenata, in addition to oversight, implementation, monitoring and reporting arrangements.

## Stakeholder engagement

While our meeting plans were curtailed by COVID-19, we were able to contact a small number of stakeholders. Those we did meet indicated that they supported the concept of a Kawenata.

We also encouraged stakeholders to participate in the online survey. The majority of organisation and group submissions were from veteran and service organisations and groups. Almost all organisations and groups that responded thought there should be something in place that commits to recognising and supporting service people and their whānau. Many believed there was value in having a Kawenata. No organisation or group thought there was no value in having a Kawenata.

If you decide to proceed with development of a Kawenata, we recommend that the next phase of development includes expanded and more deliberate engagement with stakeholders.

## CONCLUSION

Consistent with our expectations entering this process, public understanding of the lives and needs of service people and their whānau is low. The work and discussion to date should be seen as the beginning of a conversation about our service people, their experiences, recognition, and support. There is clearly further opportunity to engage with the public and stakeholders to increase their understanding and collective commitment. This engagement can proceed independently of any decision around a Kawenata.

Our research indicates that there is general support for a New Zealand Kawenata, and sufficient evidence to proceed with its development. However it must be noted that a number of people and organisations want more detail and to understand what it would mean for them. With greater information, understanding and a more concrete idea of what a Kawenata could look like and do, we anticipate that many of those who are currently undecided will support it.

These findings provide a strong base for more deliberate and focused engagement and development work. This should include further discussion of what aspects and language would make this a uniquely New Zealand Kawenata. If you choose to proceed with development of a Kawenata, the next phase of work would be to draft objectives and text for the Kawenata, so that they can be tested and refined with stakeholders, and to provide further advice on how the Kawenata could be operationalised.

## METHODOLOGY

### Advertising campaign

We used social media and traditional advertising to promote awareness of, and engagement with, the national conversation on a potential Kawenata.

All messaging directed people to the Mission Feedback webpage on the Veterans' Affairs website,<sup>10</sup> where they could complete the online survey. You launched the national conversation on 18 May. The advertising campaign followed from 19 May to 5 June.

Promotional channels included broadcast radio and digital media. Overall, a total of 1,559 radio advertisements were played, and heard by 1,194,655 people, across 18 national frequencies and 21 Māori stations nationwide.

Digital channel activity generated over six million views. The digital advertisements ran for three weeks across a vast network of predominantly New Zealand-based websites and reputable international websites (advertisements only appeared to New Zealand browsers on international websites).

### Focus groups

Research First conducted fieldwork using focus groups comprising a broad cross-section of New Zealanders based on criteria such as residency status (by birth/naturalisation), ethnicity, location, age, gender, and relationships with current or former-service members. The fieldwork commenced on 17 March 2020 and ended on 26 March 2020.

The mode of engagement was split between face-to-face and virtual focus groups. All groups held after 23 March, the day New Zealand's 48-hour deadline for the nationwide COVID-19 lockdown was announced, were held as virtual focus groups, given that face-to-face groups were no longer possible. Table 2 provides further details about the focus groups.

Table 2: Focus Groups

Number	Location	Date	No. of participants	Medium
1	Christchurch	17 March 2020	7	Face to face
2	Ashburton	17 March 2020	7	Face to face
3	North Shore	18 March 2020	6	Face to face
4	South Auckland	18 March 2020	6	Face to face
5	Hamilton	24 March 2020	5	Virtual
6	Gisborne	25 March 2020	5	Virtual
7	Wellington	26 March 2020	6	Virtual
8	Invercargill	26 March 2020	5	Virtual

<sup>10</sup> The link to the mission feedback web page is at <https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/about-veterans-affairs/our-partners-and-the-veteran-sector/boards-and-panels/veterans-advisory-board/mission-feedback>

A review of the literature on focus groups shows that focus group size can vary from 5–8 people in each group while maintaining validity.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, even under a constrained environment, fundamental research standards were sustained.

## Telephone survey

To canvass the public, Research First followed the focus groups, with telephone surveys. They surveyed a representative sample of New Zealanders (776) based on criteria such as gender, age, residency status (by birth/naturalisation), location and ethnicity. Information was also collected on proximity to current or former service personnel. The fieldwork commenced on 12 May 2020 and ended on 4 June 2020.

To ensure the robustness and reliability of the survey results, Research First used an aggregate sample size of 770 respondents (which they exceeded), yielding a maximum margin of error of 3.5% at a 95% confidence level. More importantly, this allowed the attainment of better granularity as opposed to a standard 380-person sample size.

Practically speaking, this meant being able to quantitatively compare the attitudes and perceptions of different cohorts separated geographically or by major demographics such as age, ethnicity, and family connection to service.

Demographic coverage of the telephone survey included:

- a gender balance consistent with the 2018 census, which reflects a relatively balanced split between males and females in New Zealand;
- across the surveyed regions, the survey sample matched the national (census) percentages of people aged 16 years and over in each region;
- a good mix of rural and urban respondents, noting that around 13.5%<sup>12</sup> of New Zealanders live in rural areas. The survey had a 25% representation of rural New Zealanders, based on self-identification; and
- the distribution of respondents across different ethnicities was consistent with census data.

## Online survey responses

The online survey was open for a three-week period, from 18 May to 7 June 2020. Survey responses were received online via the Survey Monkey platform. A total of 6,152 complete responses were received, while 825 incomplete responses were omitted from analysis.<sup>13</sup> All complete responses were uploaded to NVivo 12 qualitative analysis software and coded to a coding framework based on themes and questions asked in the survey.

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<sup>11</sup> Carlsen, B., & Glenton, C. (2011). What about N? A methodological study of sample-size reporting in focus group studies. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 11(1), 26.

<sup>12</sup> World Bank staff estimates based on the United Nations Population Division's World Urbanization Prospects: 2018 Revision. (n.d.). Rural population (% of total population) - New Zealand. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS?locations=NZ>

<sup>13</sup> Incomplete responses were those where the respondent entered at least one answer and clicked next on at least one survey page but did not click done on the last page of the survey.

## Number and type of respondents

A total of 6,152 respondents answered the survey. This included:

- 6,102 individual responses; and
- 50 organisation or group responses. Of these, there were 28 formal organisations, 12 informal groups, and 10 unknowns (no name was provided).

## Proximity to service people

Individual respondents included:

- 1,088 current service people;
- 3,245 former service people;
- 2,103 people who had at least one family member who was a service person;<sup>14</sup>
- 319 former or current civilian New Zealand Defence Force staff;
- 3,245 people who knew someone (not in their family) who was a service person; and
- 301 people who had no relationship to a service person.

Respondents could select more than one category of relationship, for example current service people could also select that they had a family member and knew someone who was a service person.

## Coding and analysis

All closed-ended questions were automatically coded within Survey Monkey and NVivo 12. The closed-ended questions where respondents had selected “other”, (namely location, ethnicity, and proximity to a service person) were manually re-classified to clean the data for further analysis.

Using NVivo 12, respondent’s answers to open text questions were coded to a comprehensive thematic framework based on common themes within the answers. The majority of responses were coded, and all survey responses were read to ensure all major themes were captured within coding and analysis. The analysis was supported by queries developed so that survey responses could be analysed by classification attribute such as age, ethnicity, and proximity to a service person.

The data was cross tabulated by age and ethnicity, to check for relationships between these demographic attributes and particular responses.

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<sup>14</sup> This included people who had a parent, child, partner, or other direct family member in the New Zealand Defence Force.

## GLOSSARY

<b>Current service people</b>	Current serving members of the New Zealand Defence Force including the Reserve Forces
<b>Former service people</b>	Previously serving members of the New Zealand Defence Force
<b>Kawenata</b>	A written promise or agreement that binds the parties in a permanent relationship, like a pact
<b>NZDF</b>	New Zealand Defence Force
<b>No Duff</b>	No Duff Charitable Trust is a registered charity committed to providing support for the services community (veterans and their families) in New Zealand
<b>RSA</b>	Returned and Services' Association – the 182 local RSA's around New Zealand make up the Royal New Zealand Returned and Services Association
<b>RNZRSA</b>	Royal New Zealand Returned and Services' Association – the RNZRSA's mission is to remember and care for all those impacted by service for New Zealand
<b>Veterans' Advisory Board</b>	An independent statutory board that provides advice directly to the Minister for Veterans

## **APPENDIX ONE: VETERANS' ADVISORY BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **Developing advice on a possible covenant between service personnel and the Government and people of New Zealand.**

#### **Purpose of this work**

1. The purpose of this work is to provide the Minister for Veterans with advice on a possible Covenant between those who have served and the people of New Zealand.

#### **Background**

2. In August 2018 the Minister for Veterans tasked the Veterans' Advisory Board to consider one of the recommendations arising from the review of the operation of the Veterans' Support Act 2014 by Professor Ron Paterson. Recommendation 63 of the Paterson Report<sup>15</sup> was that: The Government undertakes further work on who is a veteran and how New Zealand wants to recognise their service.
3. The interim report of the Veterans' Advisory Board was provided to the Minister on 28 June 2019.
4. The Minister has noted that one of the recommendations of the Board related to the development of a Covenant that would formalise the relationship between those who serve and the Government; and that has at its core a pledge from the Government that service members and their families are not disadvantaged by their service, and that special provision is made for those who have sacrificed the most.
5. The Minister recommended to the Cabinet that the Board should undertake a national conversation about the possibility of introducing such a Covenant in New Zealand; and the Cabinet has agreed.
6. Accordingly, the Minister has tasked the Board to develop further advice on recognising those who have served, in particular through a Covenant between service personnel and the Government and people of New Zealand.

#### **Objective**

7. The Board is expected to provide advice to the Minister on whether a Covenant between service personnel and the Government and people of New Zealand would be appropriate; if so, what form that Covenant should take; and what recognition it could provide to those who have served.

#### **Expectations**

8. The Board is expected to consider and to report to the Minister on:
  - a. whether establishing such a Covenant would reflect the wishes of New Zealanders;
  - b. the form a possible Covenant could take (for example, legislative or non-legislative);
  - c. how a Covenant could operate in New Zealand; and
  - d. how it could offer recognition to those who have served.

#### **Stakeholders**

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<sup>15</sup> Warrant of Fitness: An independent review of the Veterans' Support Act 2014, Professor Ron Paterson, March 2018

9. The Board is expected to consult with, and seek the views of:
  - a. representatives of the broad New Zealand community;
  - b. representatives of New Zealand business;
  - c. veteran support and advocacy groups;
  - d. other boards and panels that provide advice to the Minister about veterans; and
  - e. other individuals or groups where this is deemed necessary.

### **Scope**

10. The following matters are out of scope:
  - a. matters which are being addressed elsewhere as part of a response to the Paterson report;
  - b. matters which will be addressed through Government reviews or working parties;
  - c. work by officials to follow up the recommendations of the interim report of the Veterans' Advisory Board.

### **Timing and deliverable**

11. The first meeting of the Board to consider the issue must be held by the end of December 2019.
12. The Board must deliver its final advice to the Minister by 31 July 2020.

### **Support for the Board**

13. Veterans' Affairs will provide secretariat support for the Board.
14. The Board is expected to work closely with those in the New Zealand Defence Force and/or the Ministry of Defence who are also undertaking work to consider a Defence Covenant.

### **Remuneration**

15. Remuneration of Board members will be set by the Minister in accordance with the Cabinet Fees Framework. New Zealand Defence Force members are remunerated by the New Zealand Defence Force and will not receive daily fees.
16. Each member of the Board is entitled, in accordance with the Fees framework, to be reimbursed for actual and reasonable travelling and other expenses incurred in carrying out his or her office as a member.

## APPENDIX TWO: INFORMATION ON SIMILAR AGREEMENTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND AUSTRALIA

The United Kingdom and Australia both have something similar to a Kawenata. Australia has a Defence Veterans' Covenant and the United Kingdom has an Armed Forces Covenant. The United Kingdom and Australia have taken different approaches to legislating their covenants. While the Australian covenant is included in legislation, the United Kingdom's is not. Instead, the United Kingdom has legislated its oversight, monitoring and reporting arrangements for its armed forces covenant. The United Kingdom recently agreed to further incorporate the covenant into law.

### Australian Defence Force Veterans' Covenant

*"We, the people of Australia, respect and give thanks to all who have served in our Defence Force and their families.*

*We acknowledge the unique nature of military service and the sacrifice demanded of all who commit to defend our nation.*

*We undertake to preserve the memory and deeds of all who have served and promise to welcome, embrace and support all military veterans as respected and valued members of our community.*

*For what they have done, this we will do."*

The Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant encourages the Australian community to acknowledge the unique nature of military service, and support veterans and their families. It aims to recognise and acknowledge that the people of Australia value their Defence Force and those who have committed to defending their nation.

The Covenant is a new initiative that was enshrined in the Australian Veterans' Recognition (Putting Veterans and their Families First) Act 2019. An extensive system of specialised supports for Australian veterans already existed at the time the Covenant was developed. These supports and entitlements remain, and the Act provides general recognition that veterans may require support in areas such as health, employment, training, housing, access to justice, social wellbeing or community engagement.

The Covenant provides the framework that enables veterans and reservists to better connect with their community. The Covenant is supported by a recognition package including a veteran card, lapel pin and oath. Lapel pins and cards provide the opportunity for Australians to identify veterans when they are not in uniform or wearing their medals and show respect to them and their family. The Veteran Card enables access to health services.

Employers, businesses, local community groups and the broader Australian public can commit their support for the Covenant. The Covenant includes the Australian Partners of Defence membership programme which works with businesses and organisations to deliver offers to Veteran Card holders, in areas such as retail, accommodation and travel.

## United Kingdom Armed Forces Covenant

*"The first duty of Government is the defence of the realm. Our Armed Forces fulfil that responsibility on behalf of the Government, sacrificing some civilian freedoms, facing danger and, sometimes, suffering serious injury or death as a result of their duty. Families also play a vital role in supporting the operational effectiveness of our Armed Forces. In return, the whole nation has a moral obligation to the members of the Naval Service, the Army and the Royal Air Force, together with their families. They deserve our respect and support, and fair treatment.*

*Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.*

*This obligation involves the whole of society: it includes voluntary and charitable bodies, private organisations, and the actions of individuals in supporting the Armed Forces. Recognising those who have performed military duty unites the country and demonstrates the value of their contribution. This has no greater expression than in upholding this Covenant."*

The United Kingdom covenant was developed 20 years ago. The United Kingdom published the covenant in its current form in 2011.

It is intended to be an enduring covenant between the people of the United Kingdom, Her Majesty's Government and all those who serve or have served in the armed forces of the Crown and their families. In essence, the United Kingdom Covenant is a promise from the nation that those who serve or have served in the armed forces, and their families are treated fairly:

- they suffer no disadvantage in communities, the economy and society in comparison to other citizens as a result of their service to the country;
- special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved; and
- there is an opportunity for the nation to say thank you to the armed forces and a reminder of what they do.

The rationale for the covenant is that the United Kingdom removes a degree of choice from its armed forces and their families and veterans and in return this provides ongoing recognition and gives something back. The covenant recognises the moral obligation to those who serve. The covenant focuses on helping members of the armed forces community to have the same access to government and commercial services and products as any other citizen. The covenant provides for support in many areas including education and family wellbeing, having a home, starting a new career, access to healthcare, financial assistance, and discounted services.

The parties involved include the armed forces, central and local government, businesses, charities, communities, and cadet forces and volunteers. The covenant is overseen by the Ministerial Covenant and Veterans Board.

There is a requirement to report on the success of the implementation of the covenant annually to Parliament. This year the covenant will be further incorporated into law. The legislation will seek to strengthen current arrangements to remove disadvantage and improve the consistency of Covenant outcomes for the Armed Forces community.

