

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 Report¹ 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.

¹ *Warrant of Fitness: An independent review of the Veterans' Support Act 2014*, Professor Ron Paterson, March 2018

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

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.