



**BRIEFING NOTE  
to the  
MINISTER OF DEFENCE**

<b>Title</b>	<b>VACCINE MANDATE FOR NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCE (NZDF)</b>					
<b>Tracking No</b>	NZDF Tracking # 2021-350			Minister's Tracking #		
<b>Importance of the Issue</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>v</b>	<b>Moderate</b>		<b>Routine</b>	
<b>Urgency</b>	<b>URGENT</b>					
<b>Contact</b>	Air Commodore Andy Woods	Tel: s. 9(2)(a)			A/H: s. 9(2)(a)	
<p>1. Work across the Government is ongoing in determining where vaccine mandates may be appropriate for 'essential services'. In that context, this Note outlines the rationale for a vaccine mandate for the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) and Defence Areas.</p> <p>2. Currently, a health and safety risk assessment is needed to mandate vaccinations. Based on the roles or groups of roles for 11,000 civil and military staff across a complex operating environment, such a process is cumbersome and hugely time-consuming in the context of the Delta variant's prevalence in the community. It is recommended that the entirety of the NZDF should be subject to a comprehensive mandate as an 'essential service'.</p> <p>3. The NZDF is a contingent force that responds to short-notice emergencies in New Zealand and overseas; where the level of COVID risk cannot be predicted or planned for, in advance of the emergency. Vaccination is needed to protect the NZDF workforce, and those communities in New Zealand and the Pacific they may come into contact with at short notice.</p> <p>4. The NZDF is a 'blended' workforce, consisting of military personnel, civilian staff, and contractors. It operates flexibly, with military personnel able to move quickly between support and front-line roles in response to an emergency, and with civilian staff back-filling in support. Managing tasks around unvaccinated staff is impractical in the context of an integrated Force designed to respond to unpredictable emergencies.</p> <p>5. NZDF Defence Areas (Camps and Bases) are complex workplaces, including international points of entry (a port and two airports) and include accommodation and dining in the same area as the workplace. Large numbers of NZDF personnel live and work in close proximity, in barracks, with shared ablution and dining facilities, creating a unique environment that is vulnerable to the spread of COVID-19. This means that an outbreak of COVID-19 on a Camp or Base has the potential to impact a range of capabilities including the ability to operate aircraft and ships.</p> <p>6. The NZDF provides flexible response options to Government, ranging from emergency Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), to staffing MIQF. It is critical that the NZDF remains prepared to respond to these, and future unpredictable events, by making maximum use of all of the tools available to protect its personnel and the community it interacts with.</p> <p>7. The NZDF's preparedness to deliver on Government output requirements, and to provide short-notice response options will be put at risk if it is not able to minimise the risk of infection and transmission through universal vaccination of its workforce.</p> <p>8. It is recommended that you:</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a. <b>Note</b> the contents of this briefing.</p>						
<b>Minister's Comments</b>						
<b>Minister's Action</b>	Noted/Discussion required					

  
**KR SHORT**  
Air Marshal  
Chief of Defence Force

8 November 2021