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This strategy details Defence Health’s plan to continually improve the delivery of comprehensive health support across the NZDF. It sets the path to a better, stronger, healthier New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) by protecting, maintaining, improving and, when needed, restoring the health of our personnel.

Over the past four years we have made significant gain in providing a holistic health service to our people, with a clear focus on physical, mental, spiritual and social health. Operationally, we have focussed on military medicine within New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF), and a clear articulation of our operational health capability to better support our Force and meet the aims of Strategy 2025.

Responsibility for the health of the Force rests with Defence Health, Command and all individuals within the New Zealand Defence Force. This high level health strategy sets out five objectives to continually enhance the health of the Force. Operationalisation of the objectives rests with leaders throughout Defence Health, as well as individuals across the wider organisation. Success is measured by optimising health impact, developing the Health team, ensuring the wellness of the Force through an integrated health system, which is safe and sustainable.

Joint Enablers has been a journey from three Single Health Services to the stand-up of Joint Operational Health Group and the Health Directorate. Moving forward, we all as Defence Health must focus on Team Health and work better and closer together as a high performing team, an integral part of the NZDF. Developing our Health personnel and supporting the NZDF community is at the heart of who we are and why we exist. Enabling the Force operationally, either domestically or overseas, with clearly defined Health Effects is our number one priority.

Defence Health is future focussed and we are striving to improve what we do through innovation, cooperation and facilitation. Our ability to advance will be enhanced through reflective practice, feedback and continuous quality improvement. Our future journey is with partnerships within NZDF, across New Zealand private and public sector, and internationally with coalition forces. I have confidence that together we will develop a better, stronger, healthier NZDF.

Brigadier Andrew Gray
Director Defence Health/Surgeon General
New Zealand Defence Force
June 2018
PART 1: Overview of Strategy

This strategy refresh follows a review of the Defence White Paper 2016 which sets the strategic direction for the NZDF and outlines the potential future environment. The NZDF strategic documents; Future 35, Strategy 25, 2020 Ready, and the NZDF Four Year Plan set out how NZDF intends to meet and fulfil its defence and security obligations for New Zealand. A collective analysis of these has shaped the strategic direction for Defence Health (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Defence Health Strategic Direction

The challenges Defence Health faces are complex and are similar to that of the wider New Zealand health system – competing for scarce skills and experience, with pressure to achieve greater value, and needing to respond to changing and demanding patient needs. Additionally, owing to the nature of Service life within NZDF, people may be placed in harm’s way, potentially exposing them to dangerous and hazardous environments and threats not found in the New Zealand civilian context. While these threats can often be calculated and managed, latent and more insidious health effects are possible well after these exposures, with some effects lingering beyond a member’s departure from the NZDF.

NZDF’s health system is comprised of wide and varied organisational themes and specialties, but at the heart of this system are the skilled and dedicated military and civilian health personnel. Every day they work across a broad health remit, from health protection, primary health and oral health through to occupational and mental health, wellness, spiritual health, physical performance and rehabilitation. They do so in a manner that ensures the delivery and support for all NZDF operations and activities.

Figure 2: Defence Health Strategic Framework and Hierarchy of Documents
Significant progress has been made since the release of the Defence Health Strategy 2015, and the underpinning health guiding principles of: Evidence, Quality, Unity of effort, Innovation, and People focussed (EQUIP). These principles have ensured that standards across the whole of health have been maintained to deliver effective services. Key achievements include: Chaplaincy and Integrated Wellness coming under the ‘umbrella’ of Health; the establishment of health initiatives focussing on occupational health, substance misuse and mental health, and the introduction of a social worker support model. In addition there has also been a major upgrade to the Defence Medical Information System.

Figure 3: EQUIP principles

This strategy presents a set of objectives that continue to be guided by: the principles of EQUIP; building on achievements to date; the positioning NZDF for emerging health challenges and; the delivery of the NZDF strategic outcomes.

Defence Health Strategy 2025 is Defence Health’s lead strategic document, of an intended series of documents that will provide the strategic direction and framework on which operational health is to be delivered (see Figure 2).
PART 2: Health in the New Zealand Defence Force

Background

Through the health services, Corps and branches, NZDF has been providing health care to its military personnel for more than 100 years; for the most part within a single Service model and often in isolation of other NZDF systems that influence health. This changed in 2014 with the establishment of the Defence Health Directorate (DHD) as part of the Joint Enablers programme, with further changes occurring in 2015 when the JOHG was established. These changes were in response to the NZDF Future 35 strategy which set the vision for ‘joint operational excellence’ – a vision that strives for integration and joint interoperability in the way NZDF works, trains, and operates at home and abroad. Defence Health has committed itself fully to this vision.

DHD provides the strategic governance and stewardship and JOHG has provided for operational health delivery. Moving forward, Defence Health will provide leadership by coordinating, developing, delivering and managing Health across the strategic and operational health environment. Whilst the Director Defence Health has primary responsibility and accountability for this Health Strategy, it also requires acceptance and commitment from all NZDF Commanders.

Defence Health is a critical enabler ensuring that personnel are ‘health ready’ and ‘fit to fight’ for deployment. The success of their mission, operation, or exercise requires a health focus centred squarely on the individual. The influence and contribution made by military families and wider domestic support networks are critical to the overall health and wellbeing of service personnel. As a result, Defence Health will continue to provide more holistic close health support that may continue after returning from active duty and extend to veterans. Defence Health also has a duty to provide a safe and rewarding working environment for civilians and contractors ensuring that the NZDF meets its legal and moral obligations to them.

Defining Health within the NZDF

Defence Health has influence across all NZDF military, civilians, veterans, their extended families and the wider community. It contributes in important and significant ways to NZDF personnel’s overall wellbeing. Therefore the responsibility and the obligation to positively impact on multiple determinants of health is extensive and presents a significant challenge.

Within NZDF, ‘Health’ is an over-arching term for all aspects of health as defined by the World Health Organization:

’a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity’ (World Health Organization)

NZDF recognises the deepening significance of an individual’s mental, spiritual, and social wellbeing, and not just that of their physical health. As a result, Defence Health will broaden its health perspective and develop its capabilities, ensuring that it provides the rounded and contemporary approach to health support needed by small modern militaries.
Health Effects

The Health Effects that our Defence Force requires will enable and shield the Force, and deliver a comprehensive military health system that will ensure a better, stronger, healthier NZDF. They are:

- **Preparing** – our personnel and health capability
- **Protecting** – from illness or injury
- **Improving** – to be more resilient to the rigorous demands placed upon it
- **Restoring** – health when needed
- **Informing** – so robust decisions can be made that advance and maintain its health

Health Delivery

Defence Health will use ‘Effects’ to drive and empower-health delivery, including developing the capability, tools, and mechanisms. Each will be delivered through a spectrum of specialist health resources and capability bricks. The level of Effect will be determined by operational need, health threat assessment and risk analysis. Each will be connected, coordinated, and delivered to exacting standards that maintain a clear focus on enabling the Force.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prepare Health</strong></td>
<td>All personnel are ‘health ready’ and ‘fit to fight’ and health capabilities are poised and ready to act in support of Defence operations and activities e.g., vaccinations, family welfare, social services, and operationalised medical support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Protect Health</strong></td>
<td>Health protection, prevention and wellness measures are applied in order to protect the Force e.g., public health, environmental health and occupational health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improve Health</strong></td>
<td>Physical and mental resilience, conditioning, and strengthening are applied in order to improve Force fitness and operational performance e.g., fitness testing, resilience training, wellness monitoring and health promotion, including substance misuse and smoking cessation programmes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Restore Health</strong></td>
<td>Personnel are quickly returned to deployable effectiveness and their work environment in order to maintain essential manpower e.g., hearing and vision testing, health and wellness check, medical and oral health support, psychosocial support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inform Health</strong></td>
<td>Health information, research, and intelligence are applied in order to improve decision making, lead innovation, improve coordination, and enable a connected Force, e.g., health threat and health intelligence analysis, health research, health governance, health records, monitoring systems and health promotion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4: Defence Health Effects
PART 3: Defence Health Operating Environment

The Defence Health operating environment will need to consider the following:

- NZDF is a small modern military by global standards, with some 14,000 personnel (which includes 3,000 civilians). It is tasked to defend New Zealand’s sovereign territory and its national interests, both domestically and internationally.

- Global and political factors will shape the Government’s expectations and tasks that the NZDF must then prepare for and undertake. The NZDF will meet these expectations and challenges through its greatest resource – its people. Defence Health’s input into enabling personnel who are health ready and ‘fit to fight’ is pivotal in enabling NZDF to meet its obligations in an evolving strategic global environment.

- Defence Health can expect an operational environment that presents multiple and dispersed mobile actions in a joint multi-threat operating space across land, sea and air domains. This will require the provision of a wide range of health support, potentially at the same time, across an independent Joint Task Force or an expeditionary led operation, delivering the day to day activities of standing medical facilities.

- Defence Health support and critical health threat advice will be required as far forward and up front as needed in an operation. This will enable Commanders to be better informed to manage operational health risks and to maintain combat power.

- The operational health force will be mobile, ready, self-sustaining, and as responsive as the Force being supported. The ability to return personnel quickly to the workforce will contribute significantly to maintaining operational tempo and momentum.

- The flexibility needed to work alongside our military partners and to scale our health support capabilities in response to health support needs will be essential in providing a comprehensive health system.

- The Defence White Paper 2016 suggests that more events are likely, both combatant and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response (HADR), but they are likely to present as short, sharp, traumatic episodes that present new and novel health threats and challenges, and the threat of weapons and agents capable of causing mass casualty will remain.

- Defence Health will need to work as part of a Whole of Government response to HADR responses and other significant national emergency events. Partnerships and agreements that look to share responsibility and resources to ensure coordinated response and management of incidents will be needed.

- The future of Defence Health is expected to change and evolve dramatically as future technology and techniques lead the advance in medicine and the provision of health support services:
  - Trauma treatment and stabilisation could mean casualty hibernation in the front line, thus reducing the urgency for surgery, and easing the pressure on evacuation assets.
  - Combat personnel could be physically enhanced through the use of wearable smart clothing. Such clothing will enhance capability through orthopaedic and muscular support, while aiding physical protection.
Monitoring personnel through on-body sensors could enable the capture of an increasing number of physiological measurements including: sleep and stress levels; recording of exposures to toxic substances; and detection of disease.

Real-time reporting aided by health intelligence could enable the provision of evidence based environmental threats and health risks directly to Commanders, on which to support or shape their immediate actions.

Greater access to health information for Commanders could enable them to be more informed of the level of operational health risk in relation to personnel, and the health management of those individuals.

Greater access to health information for individuals could enable them to monitor their own health and wellbeing.

Micro-drones and scattered sentinel hazard monitoring systems could be used by health personnel to assist in identifying health and environmental threats; gathering information for health intelligence; and monitoring and supporting the progress of the injured in the battlespace, and elsewhere.

The ongoing emergence of mental health issues across NZDF will continue to pose unique challenges for Defence Health. Identifying the causative factors that lead to risk and vulnerability, together with a better understanding and management of these issues will require the detailed implementation of the NZDF Mental Health Strategy.

Spiritual health and pastoral care has long been a cornerstone of wellbeing. It is recognised as a limitless dimension, being immeasurable but tangible, that empowers an inner and core strength. It enhances a unity of purpose, and supports mental stamina contributing to overall health, wellbeing, and resilience.

The nature of a military lifestyle creates unique challenges and pressures on personnel, veterans and their families. Social Wellness focuses on providing the right prevention and support that empowers NZDF personnel to prepare for change and challenges that impact areas such as: emotional, financial, psychological, behavioural, and social connectedness.

Work practices that may harm our personnel are now recognised as a significant contributor to our accident rates in the workplace. Legislation requires NZDF take a strict and coordinated approach to manpower wastage. A military occupational health care system across NZDF will address this.

Defence Health is now extending beyond human boundaries. NZDF possesses military dogs for critical operational roles and these dogs must meet the strict standards for animal welfare and health when working alongside NZDF personnel. The health governance of NZDF animals is now a responsibility of Defence Health, with the intent that the continued health and welfare of all NZDF working animals, both domestically and operationally, is ensured.
PART 4: Defence Health Strategy 2025

Integrated System
- The health system is aligned and resourced to deliver quality services.
- Partnerships are leveraged to deliver the best possible effect.
- Health governance provides leadership and accountability.
- Fit-for-purpose ‘one stop’ health precincts enable multi-disciplinary healthcare.

Safe & Sustainable Service
- Comprehensive health services are easily accessed and delivered in a timely manner.
- Health service risks are managed and monitored.
- Health services meet all legislative medical requirements and patient safety requirements.
- Health intelligence identifies opportunities for improvement and health threats.

2020 READY
Better Tools, Better Support, Better Informed, Better Together

2025
Integration, Information, Relationships, People

NZDF STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Enduring Wellness
- NZDF personnel, military, civilians and their families are empowered to have greater responsibility for their own health and wellness.
- Mental health, physical conditioning and resilience is strengthened.
- Health threats are identified and managed.

Optimised Impact
- Insightful decision making and organisational risks are informed by smart information systems, reliable health metrics and data analysis.
- A culture of performance and quality improvement delivers best value use of resources.
- Standardised, modern technology and systems enables easy and efficient continuous improvement.

Team Health Enabled
- A sustainable, operationally focused workforce meets NZDF priorities.
- Career pathways support future Force requirements.
- Health has the right people, with the right competencies, in the right place.
- Career satisfaction is enriched by a rewarding and safe work environment.
- A positive culture and joined up leadership creates ownership and sustained engagement.

ENDURE STRONGER HEALTHIER NZDF

ENHANCE FORCE STRENGTH THROUGH HEALTH

VISION

MISSION
Strategic Objective 1 – Deliver an INTEGRATED health system

The NZDF Strategy 2025 requires an integrated Defence Force that is connected, coordinated and agile, able to partner with allies, whole of government agencies and other strategic organisations. Defence Health is already moving toward an integrated health system. The development of one integrated and overarching health care model will enhance health delivery.

Integration will need to be seamless, building and leveraging on the existing internal and external partnerships and arrangements that are in place with coalition partners, other civilian health providers (e.g. District Health Boards, Primary Health Organisations and private health care providers), and Government Agencies (e.g. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health, and New Zealand Medical Assistance Team). Where necessary new partnerships will be created that align with strategic needs, and enable the provision of comprehensive military health care. Partnerships will foster innovation and enable new health delivery options and better ways of doing things.

Integration will allow for the establishment of the multidisciplinary team concept that will operate from one stop ‘Health Precincts’ in New Zealand. These will be safe and accessible places where personnel can access health across the integrated physical, spiritual, mental, and social wellness range of its services. Integration will enable agile and flexible work environments and locations. This will result in more effective delivery of health services across complex medical issues, on deployment and at New Zealand health facilities.

Outcomes

- The Defence Health system (organisation design, people, information, systems, and procedures) is aligned and resourced to enable high quality service delivery and support to all NZDF operations

- Mutually beneficial relationships across NZDF, with coalition forces, and partnerships with public and private services, are leveraged to deliver the best possible effect

- Health governance provides leadership and accountability for the delivery of aligned health services, operational outputs and strategic outcomes

- Fit-for-purpose one stop ‘Health Precincts’ (facilities and equipment) that enable multi-disciplinary healthcare, are established
Strategic Objective 2 – Embed SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE health service

 Providing a safe and sustainable health service is a significant responsibility, and patient safety is the cornerstone of high-quality health care. A robust governance system will champion quality assurance, risk management, and evidence based decision making from a long term strategic perspective. A Defence Health model of care which outlines safe practices, processes, and healthy behaviours across camps, bases and on deployment, will ensure we meet and deliver the exacting health needs for all NZDF personnel.

To achieve best practice, processes and systems must align to current legislation and organisational standards. Defence Health services must be fully resourced with competent, credentialed and accredited health professionals who meet the practice standards of their professions and the NZDF.

Meeting this objective in New Zealand will pose some difficulties but, a greater challenge will be experienced in supporting operations. In the operational environment, health support may need to be delivered without fixed infrastructure and without the available and immediate support of definitive health care, while still meeting minimum standards of health care.

Outcomes

- A clearly articulated model of care is in place outlining care pathways through a multi-disciplinary patient centric approach, providing the minimum standards of health care, and setting out standard operating procedures and case management processes

- Comprehensive health services are easily accessed and delivered in a safe and timely manner, in New Zealand and on operations

- Defence Health service risks are managed through benchmarking, external evaluation and accreditation, and monitored through health information and robust governance

- Defence Health services meet all legislative, regulatory and individual professional standards, and minimum patient safety requirements

- Defence Health research and health intelligence contribute to continuous improvement, and the safe and sustainable application of health services
Strategic Objective 3 – ENABLE Team Health

The planning and management of any health workforce is challenging. Rigour is needed in the area of workforce modelling. There is a need to balance Defence Health’s military and civilian workforce capability as a long-term investment asset, within the short term operating costs of the workforce. Dispersed and multiple working locations together with skills shortages, and the need to support both domestic health and operations will continue to strain the organisation. The workforce must be managed effectively, taking into account numbers, structures, trades and ranks.

Defence Health capability must be designed to meet the needs of the NZDF. Ongoing investment (including provision of personnel) and support from the single Services is critical to enabling Defence Health to fully resource roles, and to offer an authentic and compelling value proposition to attract and retain talent into Defence Health.

Proactive career planning is demanded across Defence Health. This will include actively managing Army general List health officers and their Naval, and Air Force counterparts, engaging reservists, providing the continuing education and training needed to advance health specialists, and meeting the development needs of civilian personnel. It must also be underpinned by the efficient use of training resources which provide a wider learning and educational health curriculum to ensure Defence Health will be optimally resourced to support operations.

Building and sustaining a positive ‘Team Health’ culture is foundational to the success and performance of Defence Health. At senior levels, military and civilian Defence Health leaders are required to demonstrate strong operational leadership and skilled organisational leadership and management. To be successful those leaders will need to collaborate more, readily share information and own the vision and mission of Defence Health.

Outcomes

- A sustainable, operationally focused Defence Health workforce, comprised of the right people, with the right competencies, in the right place, at the right time are capable of delivering the health effects to meet NZDF’s priorities
- Career pathways and development for all Defence Health personnel enable the sustainable supply of competent and skilled personnel to support future Force
- Career satisfaction is enriched by a rewarding and safe work environment
- A positive culture and joined up leadership creates a ‘sense of belonging’ and shared ownership to the broader Defence Health team
Strategic Objective 4 – OPTIMISE IMPACT

Developing smart systems, collecting and analysing health data, information, and accurate reporting will provide the foundation for optimising Defence Health. This will enable information to be turned into intelligence that will inform operations. It will also identify trends in performance that will improve evidence-based strategic, management and clinical audit decisions. Benchmarking Defence Health and establishing best practice will drive a culture of continual improvement of NZDF health.

Empowering NZDF personnel through the use of technology will encourage personal ownership and responsibility for their health. This may include technological guidance on reducing non communicable disease, enhancing individual health, wellness, fitness, and longevity on a continual basis.

Optimising the Defence Health system to work in an informed and fiscally responsible manner will deliver public value and contribute to the success of our operational outcomes.

Outcomes
- Insightful decision making and organisational risks are informed by smart ‘joined up’ information systems, reliable, accurate health metrics and health data analysis
- A culture of performance and quality improvement delivers best value use of resources
- Standardised, modern technology, applications, systems and processes enable continuous improvement and changes to be made easily and efficiently
Strategic Objective 5 – Enduring WELLNESS

The provision of physical conditioning, mental health, wellness, spiritual, family, and social services will support overall wellness. Protective and preventative health measures that remove or reduce exposure to threats in the workplace will further contribute to the enduring nature of health.

Wellness is an active process determined by the choices that an individual makes. These choices are often dependent on environmental, emotional and situational awareness, but allows the individual to take steps to minimise illness, avoid injuries, and practice safe behaviours. Wellness can positively influence those choices; enabling NZDF personnel and their families to thrive and improve their overall quality of life; providing a health dimension that can prolong value adding careers and, enhancing operational readiness.

By their very nature, military operations can contribute to a higher incidence of mental and physical illness and injury. This can lead to a lowered resilience to future occupational demands, and negatively impact one’s quality of life. Defence Health is committed to playing its part in providing enduring and effective comprehensive and preventative strategies and recovery programmes that are delivered through partnerships or as a core service across occupational, physical, emotional, spiritual, environmental, financial, psychological, behavioural, and social wellness areas.

Outcomes

- NZDF personnel, military, civilians and their families are empowered and supported to have greater responsibility for their own health and wellness through access to information, education, and social health services

- NZDF overall mental health and resilience is strengthened through prevention, education, health surveillance, enhanced community and social connectedness

- NZDF overall health and resilience is strengthened through active health protection measures, health education and promotion, and enhanced community and social connectedness

- Public health monitoring, inspection, surveillance, and health intelligence services, provide strategic health opportunities while identifying and managing health threats

- Physical conditioning provides a strong foundation that supports health and resilience, while enhancing the physical performance demands needed for those on deployment

Mental Health Guides for the Defence Community
DEFENCE HEALTH

Delivering a Better, Stronger, Healthier NZDF