



**DEPARTMENT OF THE  
PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET**  
TE TARI O TE PIRIMIA ME TE KOMITI MATUA

# **Kōrero on the development of Aotearoa New Zealand's first national security strategy**

12 December 2022

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet is developing Aotearoa New Zealand's first National Security Strategy (the Strategy). This work is part of the Government's response to the [Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain on 15 March 2019](#).

The Strategy will ensure that our national security agencies contribute to a thriving, secure, and resilient Aotearoa New Zealand, and that the interests of our communities and the nation are at the heart of what they do.

This Report summarises what we heard from the public during our engagement on the development of the Strategy, from July to October 2022. It also reflects themes from other recent national security engagements, including the National Security Long-term Insights Briefing.

Over the engagement period, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet met with students and academics, Māori students, ethnic and faith-based groups, and the wider public, in a series of online and face-to-face hui across the country. These hui were complemented by an online survey open to the public.

The engagement process focused on the role different parts of society play in national security, how government can enable this participation, and what participants wanted to see in a vision for national security. We also asked about how the government can improve public trust and confidence in national security agencies, and the role of te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi in national security.

Our sincere thanks to all those who have generously shared their perspectives, knowledge, and experiences with us, even when these issues can sometimes be difficult to discuss. You have contributed to a new public conversation on national security, of which the Strategy is one important part. This is a conversation with the New Zealand public that will endure beyond the Strategy's release, and we look forward to further engagement with you.

We acknowledge those voices that may be missing from the Report and we are committed to making space for all New Zealanders to participate in the ongoing kōrero on national security.

Ngā mihi nui

Tony Lynch  
Deputy Chief Executive  
National Security Group

# What you told us

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## There is an appetite for a public conversation on national security

A prominent theme emerging from the engagement was the importance of an informed population, supported by ongoing conversation and debate on national security. This is crucial to creating awareness of national security threats, understanding our respective roles in addressing these threats, challenging established ideas, innovating new approaches, and strengthening societal resilience.

Participants were clear about how government can create the conditions for national security conversations. Three themes were raised regularly:

- **Transparency and accessibility:** to support informed discussion and ensure accountability, government must share information on the national security challenges New Zealand faces, and how these are being addressed.
- **A direct relationship with the public:** ongoing engagement with communities to provide information, hear views, cultivate trust, and encourage conversation on issues.
- **Education:** the education system is a place to learn about civics and citizenship, as well as tangible skills, for example internet safety and how to recognise mis- and dis-information.

On transparency, we heard that government should be regularly and proactively disseminating information about the national security challenges New Zealand faces, how these are being addressed, and the rationale for its stance on key matters. Several people suggested mechanisms for enhancing transparency, some proposing the government publish a regular report.

Transparency on its own is not enough. Many people said that accessibility – the ease with which our diverse communities can access, navigate and readily understand national security information – is a critical component of more informed public conversations.

The broader issue of trust was a strong theme for tauira Māori (Māori students) and some ethnic and faith organisations. We heard that there are past traumas, especially those

### 2022 National Security Survey Report

*In 2022, DPMC commissioned an independent survey from IPSOS to explore what national security means to people living in New Zealand, which threats are of most concern to them, and how we can better share information and engage with them on these topics.*

*The findings of the 2022 National Security Survey Report indicated that nearly half of respondents said they do not feel knowledgeable about the topic (44%) or that they know where to go to find more information (46%).*

associated with colonisation, which need to be explicitly acknowledged before a more genuine conversation can be had.

Some participants in these groups also linked building trust to the need for the national security workforce to take steps to ensure it reflects New Zealand's increasingly diverse community, for example by attracting a more diverse range of applicants and building cultural capability.

We heard that communities create bonds of trust that can be relied on to dissuade people from consuming and spreading disinformation and extremist views, and to prevent someone from potentially moving towards violence. We were asked to consider the growing role online communities play in our society, and the potential of some to create new, positive social bonds.

## **In general, participants agreed that different parts of society have a role to play in national security**

### **Individuals can contribute to national security, particularly online**

When we asked how people can contribute to national security, we frequently heard that everyone has a responsibility to look after each other. Some of those asked suggested ways in which ordinary individuals can contribute to national security on a day-to-day basis. Examples of this included:

- staying aware of what friends, whānau and colleagues are consuming online, and thinking critically about extreme claims, narratives and their sources;
- identifying and reporting concerning behaviour;
- Using, and encouraging others to be safe online, for example by ensuring software is up to date and two-factor logins are enabled.

### **Communities and civil society**

Participants shared examples of how communities lead the way in building a foundation of social support and belonging, and in response to major events. For example, the social services provided by churches and other groups, and the manaakitanga demonstrated by organisations such as rūnanga and marae.

*“Communities are some of the most powerful actors that can engage and assist in protecting our national security.”*

*Submission, September 2022*

## **The private sector can support our resilience alongside government**

We heard about the risks businesses face, with specific concerns raised about the risk of a terror attack.

We also heard about the roles of the private security industry, from cyber security to security guards working in communities and public spaces, and ways government could work better with this sector.

Some submitters expressed an expectation that the private sector, particularly large companies (for example, banks, electricity providers) reduce the risk of foreign interference and coercion by diversifying investment portfolios and supply chains. Many people also said that large private sector organisations have a responsibility to ensure resilient critical infrastructure, emphasising the importance of back-up systems in preparation against cyber-attacks and implementing good cyber security protocols.

## **Iwi/Māori roles in national security**

We heard about the role Māori structures and institutions at the local, regional and national level (for example marae, rūnanga, kapa haka) could play (and have played) in this context. Participants told us that regardless of the level of government support, Māori will support their own and other communities when the need arises.

Some participants were critical of what they saw as a lack of government recognition of the value of te ao Māori – for example tikanga Māori (protocols) and mātauranga Māori (knowledge) generally – but also in national security prevention, response and recovery.

## **The media plays a critical role in promoting informed discussion**

Many participants noted the essential contribution of the media in supporting informed public discussion and told us that government should work more closely with media to publicise national security issues. Many people emphasised what they saw as the media's role in ensuring national security issues are accurately and responsibly reported on.

## **While many people agreed wider society has a role to play in national security, they also thought government needed to better resource these contributions**

Beyond building knowledge and awareness, participants told us government should better resource communities and civil society to contribute to national security policy development.

We heard that civil society and community organisations are already leading initiatives that are making positive contributions to national security, including contributing to policy development. However, this is often happening without access to adequate resourcing.

Building on the issue of community resourcing initially signalled in the 2022 National Security Survey Report, a range of participants recommended the Strategy leave space for community-led approaches, and that government funding is critical to support these.

Some submitters had specific ideas, for example proposals the Strategy should support businesses by including the roll-out of security training and awareness programmes, with a focus on the needs of small to medium size businesses, as part of its implementation.

Many online submissions saw the Defence Force as a fundamental pillar of our national security and were concerned that the Defence Force is not appropriately prepared or funded.

Other contributors called for us to reassess funding for defence and intelligence agencies and thought that these resources would be better used in supporting climate change and social policy.

## **People wanted to see New Zealand’s unique identity reflected in the Strategy...**

Many people emphasised the importance of being guided by values and agreed that the Strategy should reflect what makes New Zealand unique. We heard that visions of wellbeing and security are often aligned, with a number of people raising New Zealand’s response to COVID-19 as an example of how New Zealanders have worked together to protect our communities.

### **...by reflecting Te Tiriti o Waitangi...**

While some respondents had difficulty articulating the relevance of te Tiriti/the Treaty in the national security context, there was general support for reflection of te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi in the Strategy, because of its enduring significance for all New Zealanders.

For some participants the government’s obligations as a Treaty partner in this context included understanding the threats Māori face and acting to protect them, with a number of people sharing that these are a major concern. Some proposed formal mechanisms for ensuring Māori voices are heard in the development of national security policy, and better representation of Māori in the national security workforce.

## **2022 National Security Survey Report**

*Concerns around community resourcing were reflected in the 2022 National Security Public Survey. A minority of respondents answered in the positive when asked if they felt that New Zealand communities had the ‘tools and resources’ to respond to critical security issues like misinformation (31%), cyber attacks (19%), and terrorism (21%).*

Participants from a range of backgrounds felt that te ao Māori offers a uniquely New Zealand approach to national security that benefits all New Zealanders. However, te ao Māori concepts must be appropriately applied, with an understanding of their full meaning.

*Explicit reference to mātauranga māori should be added to the national security strategy so that mātauranga māori is incorporated in academic and policy expertise around national security in Aotearoa from the outset.*

*Submission, September 2022*

### **...and our identity in and of the Pacific**

We heard that New Zealand's national security is woven within the security of the Pacific and that the Strategy should reflect this. Our relationships with Pacific nations are built on a shared history, geography and strong people-to-people links. Based on their perspectives and experiences, participants discussed shared Pacific security concerns, including strategic competition, the need to secure undersea cables, and our regional resilience.

The significant contributions of diaspora communities (particularly in the Pacific) to our international relationships was highlighted, alongside a need for greater understanding and recognition of these diverse links by government. The enduring relationship between Māori and our Pacific whanaunga was characterised as a pillar for our role in our region, and something to be emphasised in the Strategy.

### **Participants expressed a range of views on the nature and scope, and vision of national security**

There was consistent support for a more proactive approach to national security in light of the intergenerational nature of many national security challenges and rapid technological change.

*While a robust response mechanism is important, the focus of our National Security Strategy should be on prevention and a collective effort to identify and mitigate threats.*

*Submission, September 2022*

Participants recognised that national security has both domestic and international components, with many expressing concern about the growth of overseas influences in the online environment—from cyber-attacks to radicalisation. Participants also raised concerns about foreign interference and the impact of global geopolitics on New Zealand and our region.

As part of this engagement, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet shared a more focused concept of national security centred on threats that would do us harm. Many participants were supportive of a more focused approach, while recognising it still provides space for the national security implications of broader issues to be considered, including:

- mis and disinformation, and the potentially corrosive effects these threats can have on our social cohesion and democracy.
- climate change, in terms of its potential flow on effects for regional stability

Some participants saw climate change as the greatest national security challenge facing New Zealand and the Pacific region, urging accelerated action to mitigate emissions and adapt within the coming decades (for example, to take steps to ensure energy security).

Across this engagement, we heard that national security is built on a foundation of social cohesion and wellbeing. Many participants saw strong relationships among New Zealand's diverse communities, and between these communities and government, as critical to this.

For some participants, the concept of national security could not be distinguished from the need for adequate housing, nutrition and education. This reflects some of the feedback from earlier engagement on national security as intrinsically tied to wellbeing and resilience.

### **Visions of national security**

We asked participants what they wanted to see in a vision for national security.

Many of their answers are included throughout this document. A vision centred on the idea of 'working together' resonated with many people, particularly in the face of intergenerational challenges with wide-ranging impacts, like misinformation, climate change, and emerging technology. Some wanted to see reflections of concepts such as manaakitanga and kaitiakitanga in a vision.

Others, while comfortable with a focus on the future, also wanted to see acknowledgment of New Zealand's past. We also received a range of ideas on how exactly a vision could be put into action.

### **The role of a National Security Strategy**

Most participants were supportive of the Strategy as an overarching guide for national security agencies and government. There was interest in how the Strategy and the vision it presents will retain longevity and flexibility in response to political changes. Participants stressed the need to look for cross-party support on the values underpinning the Strategy as a way to ensure the sustainability of its intentions.

*"We need to be aware of the breadth of issues that our security depends on, and how the government works to address those issues. This includes the importance of working with many other countries to address the threats that they might directly bring, but more importantly, to address the many shared challenges, such as pandemics, climate change and many other issues."*

*Submission, October 2022*

Participants frequently emphasised the value of the Strategy as a place to signal our ongoing commitment to the international rules-based system and to strengthen our partnerships with other states on issues where we share common interests. We also heard about the importance of emphasising that New Zealand's interests and collective global interests are connected, particularly in the domain of human rights and the international rules-based system.

## **Next steps**

Officials are preparing Aotearoa's first National Security Strategy, incorporating insights from this engagement, alongside further analysis. The Strategy is one part of a wider conversation on national security and we look forward to further engagement with you.

## **How we engaged on the National Security Strategy**

Public engagement on the Strategy began in July 2022 and finished in October 2022. Engagement was in two parts:

### *Written submissions*

We heard from the wider New Zealand public via an online survey that ran from 11 August until 9 October. We also received a number of other written submissions.

In total, we received submissions from around 57 individuals and eight organisations.

Survey questions focused on how people thought we could work together to protect New Zealand (a core theme of the Strategy). The questions were:

- What can you and your community do to contribute to a more secure New Zealand?
- What can business and civil society do to contribute to a more secure New Zealand?
- What can government do to help you contribute to national security?
- How could the principles of te Tiriti o Waitangi be practically demonstrated in national security?
- What can the government do to increase your trust and confidence in how we manage New Zealand's national security?
- What do you want to see included in New Zealand's vision of national security?

Recorded ethnicity data broadly reflects the New Zealand population, though the proportion of submissions from Māori and Pasifika were at around half of their representation in the population. We held standalone sessions with key stakeholders from Pasifika communities and with Māori.

The majority of those who provided written submissions were aged between 36 and 65 (over 60 per cent). A major component of our in-person engagement was with students under the age of 25.

### *Hui and workshops*

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet held hui with students at universities around the country, including with tauira Māori. Many thanks to those who hosted us and facilitated discussions, and to those who shared insights from their research across related fields.

We also held hui with ethnic and faith-based community groups and a talanoa with Pasifika leaders, with great thanks for the time and experiences shared with us.

Online engagement was accompanied by webinars, and we are grateful for the thoughtful questions we were asked in this forum.