

# Departmental Disclosure Statement

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Veterans Recognition Bill
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The departmental disclosure statement for a government Bill seeks to bring together in one place a range of information to support and enhance the Parliamentary and public scrutiny of that Bill.

It identifies:

- the general policy intent of the Bill and other background policy material;
- some of the key quality assurance products and processes used to develop and test the content of the Bill;
- the presence of certain significant powers or features in the Bill that might be of particular Parliamentary or public interest and warrant an explanation.

This disclosure statement was prepared by Veterans' Affairs.

Veterans' Affairs certifies that, to the best of their knowledge and understanding, the information provided is complete and accurate at the date of finalisation.

23 July 2025

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## Part One: General Policy Statement

The Veterans' Recognition Bill (the **Bill**)—

- offers symbolic recognition of the service of members of the New Zealand Defence Force (regular forces and territorial forces, as defined in the Defence Act 1990), who have left the New Zealand Defence Force and whose service has qualified them for medallic recognition, by officially recognising them as veterans; and
- provides further recognition to those veterans in the form of a military Covenant established between the Crown, the people of New Zealand, and the veterans.

The current legal definition of veteran in New Zealand is more limited than the use of the term in everyday language. The definition in section 7 of the Veterans' Support Act 2014 does not cover everyone who has served in the New Zealand Defence Force. This is appropriate in terms of the targeting of the support available in that legislation. It is based on the premise that that Act should support those who are specifically sent by the Government into situations that put them at significant risk of harm. Only those who meet the terms of the definition of veteran in that Act can receive the associated entitlements.

However, many who have served in the New Zealand Defence Force tend to see the term veteran as a positive form of recognition for what is often long and honourable service, albeit service which does not meet the criteria in the Veterans' Support Act 2014.

The recognition conferred by the Bill does not affect any other Act, including the Veterans' Support Act 2014, or entitlements under that Act.

The Covenant follows existing covenants that are in place in Australia and the United Kingdom. It acknowledges the Crown's responsibility for the defence of New Zealand that is performed by members of the New Zealand Defence Force and the unique nature of military life—that it involves curtailment of freedoms and sacrifice made by both service personnel and their families. It obliges the Crown and the people of New Zealand, consistent with existing law, to—

- respect and thank all those who have served in the New Zealand Defence Force as veterans:
- acknowledge the unique nature of military service and the sacrifices demanded of all who commit to defend New Zealand:
- treat them with the respect and dignity that preserves and enhances their mana:
- recognise them by acknowledging their personal sacrifices and the experiences their service entailed:
- celebrate them:
- preserve their memory and deeds:
- welcome, embrace, and support them as respected and valued members of our community.

The Bill makes it clear that there is no intention to create legal relations or legal rights or obligations, and that the Covenant is a moral commitment by the parties.

## Part Two: Background Material and Policy Information

### Published reviews or evaluations

<b>2.1. Are there any publicly available inquiry, review or evaluation reports that have informed, or are relevant to, the policy to be given effect by this Bill?</b>	<b>NO</b>
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### Relevant international treaties

<b>2.2. Does this Bill seek to give effect to New Zealand action in relation to an international treaty?</b>	<b>NO</b>
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### Regulatory impact analysis

<b>2.3. Were any regulatory impact statements provided to inform the policy decisions that led to this Bill?</b>	<b>NO</b>
The Ministry for Regulation has determined that this proposal is exempt from the requirement to provide a Regulatory Impact Statement on the grounds that the impact of the new legislation will be minimal.	

### Extent of impact analysis available

<b>2.4. Has further impact analysis become available for any aspects of the policy to be given effect by this Bill?</b>	<b>NO</b>
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<b>2.5. For the policy to be given effect by this Bill, is there analysis available on:</b>	
<b>(a) the size of the potential costs and benefits?</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>(b) the potential for any group of persons to suffer a substantial unavoidable loss of income or wealth?</b>	<b>NO</b>
It is assessed that a population of approximately 140,000 have served in the New Zealand Defence Force. The proposed legislation would define a significant number of those as veterans for the purpose of this Act. There are no financial implications associated with the bill.	

<b>2.6. For the policy to be given effect by this Bill, are the potential costs or benefits likely to be impacted by:</b>	
<b>(a) the level of effective compliance or non-compliance with applicable obligations or standards?</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>(b) the nature and level of regulator effort put into encouraging or securing compliance?</b>	<b>NO</b>
The legislation does not create new obligations or standards, or impact on existing obligations or standards.	

## Part Three: Testing of Legislative Content

### Consistency with New Zealand's international obligations

**3.1. What steps have been taken to determine whether the policy to be given effect by this Bill is consistent with New Zealand's international obligations?**

Consultation has not taken place as there are no implications for New Zealand's international obligations.

### Consistency with the government's Treaty of Waitangi obligations

**3.2. What steps have been taken to determine whether the policy to be given effect by this Bill is consistent with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi?**

There has been no specific consultation, but the WAI 2500 Military Veterans' Kaupapa Inquiry is aware of it.

### Consistency with the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990

**3.3. Has advice been provided to the Attorney-General on whether any provisions of this Bill appear to limit any of the rights and freedoms affirmed in the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990?**

**TBC**

### Offences, penalties and court jurisdictions

**3.4. Does this Bill create, amend, or remove:**

(a) offences or penalties (including infringement offences or penalties and civil pecuniary penalty regimes)?

**NO**

(b) the jurisdiction of a court or tribunal (including rights to judicial review or rights of appeal)?

**NO**

### Privacy issues

**3.5. Does this Bill create, amend or remove any provisions relating to the collection, storage, access to, correction of, use or disclosure of personal information?**

**NO**

### External consultation

**3.6. Has there been any external consultation on the policy to be given effect by this Bill, or on a draft of this Bill?**

**YES**

There was consultation on the policy with government agencies – the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Ministry of Defence, the New Zealand Defence Force, the Parliamentary Council Office, and the Treasury.

### Other testing of proposals

**3.7. Have the policy details to be given effect by this Bill been otherwise tested or assessed in any way to ensure the Bill's provisions are workable and complete?**

**NO**

## Part Four: Significant Legislative Features

### Compulsory acquisition of private property

4.1. Does this Bill contain any provisions that could result in the compulsory acquisition of private property?	NO
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### Charges in the nature of a tax

4.2. Does this Bill create or amend a power to impose a fee, levy or charge in the nature of a tax?	NO
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### Retrospective effect

4.3. Does this Bill affect rights, freedoms, or impose obligations, retrospectively?	NO
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### Strict liability or reversal of the usual burden of proof for offences

4.4. Does this Bill:	
(a) create or amend a strict or absolute liability offence?	NO
(b) reverse or modify the usual burden of proof for an offence or a civil pecuniary penalty proceeding?	NO

### Civil or criminal immunity

4.5. Does this Bill create or amend a civil or criminal immunity for any person?	NO
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### Significant decision-making powers

4.6. Does this Bill create or amend a decision-making power to make a determination about a person's rights, obligations, or interests protected or recognised by law, and that could have a significant impact on those rights, obligations, or interests?	NO
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### Powers to make delegated legislation

4.7. Does this Bill create or amend a power to make delegated legislation that could amend an Act, define the meaning of a term in an Act, or grant an exemption from an Act or delegated legislation?	NO
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4.8. Does this Bill create or amend any other powers to make delegated legislation?	NO
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### Any other unusual provisions or features

4.9. Does this Bill contain any provisions (other than those noted above) that are unusual or call for special comment?	NO
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