



## Proactive Release

The following documents have been proactively released by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) on behalf of (Rt Hon Chris Hipkins), Minister for National Security and Intelligence:

Aotearoa New Zealand's National Security Intelligence Priorities – 2022 Cabinet Report

Minute of Decision Aotearoa New Zealand's National Security Intelligence Priorities: 2022 Report

Report of the Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee: Period Ended 16 December 2022

Aotearoa New Zealand's National Security Intelligence Priorities: 2022 Report

The following documents have been included in this release:

- Paper: Aotearoa New Zealand's National Security Intelligence Priorities: 2022 Report (ERS-22-SUB-0059)
- Minute: Aotearoa New Zealand's National Security Intelligence Priorities: 2022 Report (ERS-22-MIN-0059)
- Minute: Report of the Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee: Period Ended 16 December 2022 (CAB-22-MIN-0586)
- Paper: Aotearoa New Zealand's National Security Intelligence Priorities – 2022 Cabinet Report

Some parts of this information release would not be appropriate to release and, if requested, would be withheld under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Where this is the case, the relevant section of the Act that would apply has been identified. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

### Key to redaction codes:

- Section 6(a), to protect the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand
- Section 9(2)(f)(iv), to maintain the confidentiality of advice tendered by or to Ministers and officials

# Aotearoa New Zealand's National Security Intelligence Priorities

2022 Cabinet Report

Proactively Released

## Foreword

Tēnā koutou katoa,

Since 2012, Aotearoa New Zealand's national security sector has prioritised its national intelligence production efforts under the National Security Intelligence Priorities – often referred to as 'the NSIPs' or 'the Priorities'.

Over that time, many of the NSIPs have remained consistent and core to our intelligence production efforts. We have also sought to continuously adapt the NSIPs to an ever-changing national security environment, to ensure these are used to support decision-makers with timely and relevant intelligence.

As the breadth and complexity of national security challenges continue to grow, it is of increasing importance that intelligence efforts are focused in the right place at the right time. ***Prioritising our intelligence efforts to best support decision-making and action-taking on national security has never been more critical.***

Ko tō tātou kāinga tēnei – the report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain (the Royal Commission) recommended significant changes to New Zealand's national security system. Progress is underway, for example through the development of Aotearoa New Zealand's first National Security Strategy and related reforms, and as part of this we will be exploring how the NSIPs can be further improved to support the delivery of New Zealand's vision for national security and help actively protect our national security interests.

This Report is the first of its kind; developed to facilitate discussion with Ministers, increase transparency, and provide an overview of progress made against the NSIPs over 2022. Through this Report we share information about:

- why national security intelligence priorities matter;
- what we have done differently following the Royal Commission report;
- some of the key NSIPs-related achievements and activities of the past year; and
- opportunities for further improvement.

As we look ahead to the next review of the NSIPs, we will seek to integrate insights shared by Ministers, the parliamentarians, and the public, and continue to prioritise our intelligence production with the enduring goal of keeping New Zealand and New Zealanders safe and secure through intelligence-informed decision-making.

Ngā mihi,

**Nicky Eaton**

*Chair, National Intelligence Coordination Committee (NICC)*

## Our National Security Intelligence Priorities | Whakaarotau Marumaru Aotearoa

The National Security Intelligence Priorities ('NSIPs' or 'the Priorities') – Whakaarotau Marumaru Aotearoa – outline the Government's requirements for intelligence that can support informed decision-making about our national security (see **Appendix A**).

### Why have National Security Intelligence Priorities?

A crucial part of any country's national security system is its ability to make sense of global and domestic environments. Intelligence is a critical input to this. For the purposes of this Report "intelligence" refers to processed information (from a variety of sources), assessment and other reporting. The NSIPs help guide this effort to where it is needed most, to best support decision-making on key national security issues. Our Priorities:

- **help guide agencies to prioritise intelligence efforts and resources** to deliver decision-making advantage to New Zealand on government's key areas of national security interest;
- **enable an evidence-based understanding of threats, risks, and challenges to our national security.** By providing intelligence on key areas of interest we are better placed to understand our most pressing national security issues, and support more informed decision-making and action by government on them;
- **provide a common framework for agencies**, both individually and as a collective, helping to increase understanding and alignment of intelligence production across the system;
- **help us adapt and respond to changes in our national security environment.** Intelligence has been used to inform the government's response to threats to our national security as they arise, such as COVID-19 and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, enabled by having relevant yet flexible NSIPs agreed ahead of time; and
- **enable us to be more transparent about how intelligence efforts are prioritised** across the breadth of national security challenges we face.

### Who are the NSIPs for and how are they used?

The NSIPs guide agencies<sup>1</sup> that produce intelligence, assessment and reporting to support decision-making on national security, and set the parameters within which agencies focus their intelligence efforts.

The NSIPs allow individual agencies discretion regarding where efforts are placed; exactly how each individual agency makes use of the NSIPs depends on their expertise, capability, resources, mandate and legislative provisions. As such, not all agencies can or should provide intelligence or assessment on all priorities all the time.

There are no targeted funding arrangements for the NSIPs. Instead, individual agencies have a responsibility for allocating resources for intelligence activity against the NSIPs. In order to make

---

<sup>1</sup> Specifically, these agencies are: Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment; Government Communications Security Bureau; New Zealand Security Intelligence Service; New Zealand Customs Service; Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (National Security Group including National Assessments Bureau); New Zealand Defence Force; New Zealand Police; Ministry of Defence; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade; and the Ministry for Primary Industries.

the most of those resources, however, agencies should consider the collective distribution of effort across them. This is why cross-agency governance and coordination of effort is important.

### How are the NSIPs governed?

The NSIPs are set by Cabinet and reviewed every two-to-three years. The current NSIPs were agreed in November 2021 and are set for review again next year.

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) leads the development and implementation of the NSIPs, working with intelligence and assessment agencies, through the National Intelligence Coordination Committee (NICC).<sup>2</sup> NICC is a sub-committee of the Security and Intelligence Board (SIB) and is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the NSIPs. This governance role includes identifying, managing and escalating gaps and challenges relating to the NSIPs and their coordination.

### How do the NSIPs help us manage risks to our national security?

The National Security Intelligence Priorities and the National Risk Register are two key national-level frameworks that help support informed and effective decision-making by government on national security.

The Risk Register supports government to take a coordinated and proactive approach to managing hazards and threats that have been identified as “nationally significant” – that is, risks that are likely to undermine our national security and prosperity, damage our collective wellbeing, and have a dramatic effect if these eventuate. There are 42 risks included on our National Risk Register - **Appendix B** provides a detailed summary of these risks and how these have been assessed.

The Risk Register is underpinned by the National Risk Approach, which supports responsible government agencies to identify, understand and assess nationally significant risks, their potential impact on the lives of New Zealanders, and the actions that can be taken to mitigate and build resilience to them ahead of time.

Intelligence is critical in helping us understand and assess a number of our nationally significant risks, and threats to our national security interests. This can include better-understanding intentions and capabilities of those who may wish to do New Zealand harm, the drivers and methods for such activity, the likelihood and consequence if it were to occur, and any changes to the nature of the threat. Intelligence can also help us understand what these threats may look like in the future, and help identify emerging risks.

The National Risk Register and National Risk Approach will be considered as part of the ongoing review of the national security system function and form (National Security Reform programme).

---

<sup>2</sup> Member agencies are those listed in footnote 1 on page 3.

## Responding to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain

The Royal Commission identified “ensuring there is better leadership of, and support for, intelligence and security in New Zealand” as a priority for action. It concluded that stronger government leadership and direction on national security was required, including more engaged and accountable decision-making. The Royal Commission also highlighted that system settings limited opportunities to effectively drive national security and intelligence effort. Opportunities to more strongly align intelligence, policy, and decision-making were identified, as was the need for stronger sector and political leadership, including “more debate on, and cross-party support for, national security issues”.

Specific to the NSIPs, the Royal Commission concluded these were too broad to be useful and did not contribute effectively to system-wide decision-making about the prioritisation and coordination of intelligence effort. The Royal Commission also emphasised the need for more detail beyond the broad scope of the NSIPs, to help agencies make better-informed decisions about where to focus effort, and called for more transparency about those decisions.

There is an ongoing work programme (the Royal Commission of Inquiry Response) to fully address Royal Commission recommendations, including two relating specifically to the NSIPs.<sup>3</sup> Alongside this, over the past year we have sought to respond to the findings and reflect the overall intent of the Royal Commission by:

- providing more detail within the NSIPs;
- clarifying roles and responsibilities for reporting against the NSIPs;
- increasing transparency with a view to integrating insights from public engagement on national security; and
- improving our engagement with Ministers and other parliamentarians on the NSIPs.

Each of these efforts are discussed in further detail below.

### Providing more detail within the NSIPs

The NSIPs provide guidance across a broad set of areas to ensure they capture as many potential intelligence needs for government as possible. The most recent iteration of the NSIPs (agreed in 2021 and implemented throughout 2022), however, introduced ‘Key Areas of Focus’ and ‘Intelligence Requirements’ to provide more specificity for agencies about where, within each priority, intelligence is expected to provide the most value to decision makers. **Appendix C** provides an example of how these changes have helped benefit the system.

### Clarifying roles and responsibilities for reporting against the NSIPs

Under the previous framework, issues were raised related to clearly identifying expectations, roles and responsibilities. In response to the Royal Commission, the most recent iteration of the NSIPs introduced an identifiable collection of agencies (those represented at NICC and listed in footnote 1) responsible for reporting against them, helping provide greater transparency in this area.

---

<sup>3</sup> These are summarised as: Recommendation 8: include a summary of advice from the Counter Terrorism Advisory Group, and actions in response, when providing advice on the NSIPs; and Recommendation 17: require in legislation that the NSIPs be published and referred to the Intelligence and Security Committee, which is to also receive and consider submissions on them.

## Increasing transparency with a view to integrating insights from public engagement on national security

Building on existing efforts to increase transparency on national security, in response to the Royal Commission the national security sector has taken early steps to change the way it engages with the public. This includes efforts to lift visibility on these matters and better understand what New Zealanders think about national security.

In December 2021, government released a public version of the NSIPs with more detail than ever before, including a number of the 'Key Areas of Focus' taken from the classified version. This represented a significant increased level of transparency and sought to help the public better understand the NSIPs and how they are utilised.

A programme of public engagement is underway to better understand national security issues from the perspective of New Zealanders (see **Appendix D**). This has provided valuable insights of relevance to the NSIPs, including increasing our understanding of which national security threats are of most concern to the public.

Officials continue to reflect on insights gained through public engagement efforts and we will look to incorporate these into the next review of the NSIPs where appropriate.

## Improving our engagement with Ministers and other parliamentarians on the NSIPs

While the NSIPs are endorsed by Cabinet every two-to-three years, they are not usually subject to interim review. However, over 2022 officials have engaged Ministers and other parliamentarians to help strengthen involvement and awareness at the political level.

Leveraging intelligence relating to the NSIPs, officials have engaged with the Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) to discuss key national security challenges including mis-and-disinformation, foreign interference, and cyber security. Intelligence relating to the NSIPs has also informed discussions by the Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee (ERS), particularly in relation to s6(a)

In April 2022 officials briefed the ISC to help foster an understanding of the role of the NSIPs in government decision-making and how these fit within wider national security settings. This also supported the ISC to consider the role it wishes to play in relation to the NSIPs, in line with recommendation 1 of the Royal Commission.

This Report, provided to both the ISC and Cabinet ERS for consideration, represents a new touchpoint, and intends to provide a broader set of Ministers and parliamentarians an opportunity to discuss the NSIPs and consider options for their improvement. Officials will look to make this Report a permanent feature of the NSIPs review cycle.

## Other key achievements and activities this year

In addition to the broad improvements outlined above, progress has also been made in leveraging the NSIPs to actively protect our national security interests and better support decision-making on national security. **Appendix C** provides case studies that outline some of the key NSIPs-related achievements and activities of the last year, as well as demonstrate some of the benefits the framework has provided.

## Opportunities for further improvement

The national security system is undergoing reform following the Royal Commission, supported by the development of a National Security Strategy and a review of the national security system functions and form.

s9(2)(f)(iv)

Meanwhile, the Strategy will help further illuminate and guide where intelligence efforts can be best support decision-making to actively protect our national security interests.

As part of these wider system changes, there is opportunity to further build on the progress made against the NSIPs this year. This section identifies **three key opportunities** where we consider this could be of most benefit.

### Improving coordinated, collective prioritisation decision-making

The Royal Commission talked about the need for improved system-wide, collective decision-making to ensure intelligence prioritisation or “allocation of effort” is appropriate and based on the assessment of threats to our national security.

Throughout 2022 the sector has made progress to collectively coordinate and prioritise intelligence efforts to support decision-making on national security. Of note is the ongoing work to inform government’s response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, including cross-system efforts to identify and address information gaps and promote a common understanding of the situation (see **Appendix C**). Opportunities exist to ensure that this progress is sustained and that the system is supported and equipped to collectively coordinate and prioritise intelligence efforts both within and across a broad set of areas.

s9(2)(f)(iv)

s9(2)(f)(iv)

s9(2)(f)(iv)

- s9(2)(f)(iv)



## Coordinating investment in the system's capability to deliver against the NSIPs

An effective national security system is one which invests in developing both unique (i.e., agency) and shared (i.e., system) intelligence capabilities. This includes investing in people, processes, and technology to better support intelligence production and analysis.

Agencies continue to develop capabilities to support and enable them to deliver intelligence effort against the NSIPs. s6(a)

There is, however, opportunity for the system to take a more coordinated, strategic and forward-looking approach to investment to ensure optimal delivery against the NSIPs, both now and into the future.

s9(2)(f)(iv)

s9(2)(f)(iv)

These broad opportunity areas are in scope of the National Security Reform programme, which is considering national security system funding arrangements and mechanisms for resourcing cross-system problems, including for national intelligence and its prioritisation.

## Better connecting intelligence, policy and decision-making

Information provided by intelligence can be invaluable to our understanding and forewarning of national security threats. Intelligence is most valuable when it is shared with the right people at the right time to inform and support decision-making on issues that matter to our national security. Alignment and integration between intelligence, policy and other decision-making is therefore crucial.

Throughout 2022 officials have focused efforts to better connect, align, and integrate intelligence with decision making, as was called for by the Royal Commission. The establishment of regular in-person intelligence briefings for Chief Executives and senior officials, for example, has helped insert timely and relevant intelligence into the decision-making cycle while normalising intelligence as a key input into policy formulation (see **Appendix C**).

Officials have also taken steps to better engage with Ministers and parliamentarians to help lift collective awareness and understanding of key national security and intelligence matters, including the NSIPs. This includes cross-agency efforts to provide Ministers with tailored, in-person classified briefings to support preparations for key bilateral engagements and international travel, in addition to engagements with the ISC and Cabinet ERS on a range of national security challenges (as previously noted). Opportunities exist to further build on progress made.

Such initiatives have been well received across the system and have demonstrated the value of focusing cross-agency efforts to support them. There is now opportunity, such as via the system changes being prompted by the National Security Reform programme, to ensure mechanisms to support intelligence-led decision-making are sustainable, enduring, and a cornerstone of the future national security system.

Building on progress made to date, pursuing these improvements will better position the system to act early on national security threats and opportunities, as called for by the Royal Commission, as well as help generate options for Ministers to shape and influence the environment in New Zealand's interest.

## Looking ahead

The NSIPs are scheduled for review in 2023. Through this review there is opportunity to incorporate what we learn through greater engagement with Ministers and ISC on the NSIPs as well as the public consultation on national security undertaken this year.

Next year will also likely involve change for the national security system. For the NSIPs, the implementation of the National Security Strategy will help provide further guidance as to where intelligence efforts can best support decision-making, while the National Security Reform programme will look to recommend improvements to support effective national intelligence coordination and integration. It is hoped these changes will provide the platform for the system to make further progress against some of the key opportunities highlighted in this Report.

We look forward to continuing the conversation with Ministers and the public on the NSIPs in the year ahead, and summarising progress made on them in the next iteration of this Report.

# Appendix A: The National Security Intelligence Priorities (2021)

~~RESTRICTED~~

## NATIONAL SECURITY INTELLIGENCE PRIORITIES (NSIPS) 2021 WHAKAAROTAU MARUMARU AOTEAROA

The NSIPs are the Government's key areas of focus for agencies that provide intelligence, information and assessment.

3 key drivers that cut across and impact the majority of the 13 NSIPs:

- Misinformation and disinformation
- Covid-19
- Climate change



### Climate change and environmental issues

Domestic and international environmental and natural resources challenges



### Biosecurity and human health

Threats to our biosecurity and human health, helping us warn against potential incidents and inform responses



### Emerging, critical and sensitive technology

Harms, benefits, and other current and future impacts of different technologies



### Malicious cyber activity

Cyber threats from state-sponsored and non-state actors



### Foreign interference and espionage

Activities that foreign state and non-state actors may use to exercise malign influence, interference, and espionage in, or involving, New Zealand



### Terrorism and violent extremism

Terrorism and violent extremism threats that could affect New Zealanders



### Global governance & strategic competition

Emerging developments in global governance and strategic positioning by states that could impact New Zealand



### Global economic security

Domestic, regional and global economic changes, challenges and opportunities for New Zealand



### Maritime, border security and Antarctica

Threats to our maritime domain, air borders, and potential foreign state activity in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean



### New Zealand's strategic interests in the Pacific region

Effects of domestic and regional security issues in the Pacific region for New Zealand



### New Zealand's strategic interests in the Asia region

Effects of domestic and regional security issues in the Asia region for New Zealand



### Threats to New Zealanders overseas

Threats to physical safety and security of New Zealanders in other countries



### Transnational serious and organised crime

Threats to New Zealand from transnational serious crime and transnational organised crime

The NSIPs support understanding and decision-making on relevant:

- Nationally significant risks
- National security-related strategies
- National security objectives

All NSIPs operate within existing agency mandates and legislative provisions: they do not alter or change the responsibilities or accountabilities of agency effort.

**Appendix B - Withheld in full**



Proactively Released

Proactively Released

Proactively Released

~~RESTRICTED | NOT GOVERNMENT POLICY~~

Proactively Released



Proactively Released



## Appendix C: Case studies - the NSIPs in action

(Classified – to be attached separately).

**Appendix C - Withheld in full under S6(a)**

Proactively Released

## Appendix D: Summary of public engagement on national security over 2022

In response to the Royal Commission, the sector is changing the way it engages with the public to help lift visibility and transparency, and better understand what New Zealanders think about national security. A programme of public engagement is underway to support this; a summary of which is provided below.

### National Security Strategy

In July 2022 Cabinet agreed that officials progress the development of a National Security Strategy, subject to a public engagement process.

This process ran from July to October 2022, and included a mix of online and in-person hui with students and academics at universities across New Zealand, faith and ethnic peak organisations, Pacific leaders, and the wider public. Māori perspectives were sought through sessions with Māori academics and students. To complement these hui, a range of approximately 400 community, private and Māori organisations were directly invited to participate in an online submissions process, which was also open to all New Zealanders.

The engagement focused on the roles that different parts of society can play in national security, how governments can enable this participation, and what participants wanted to see in a national security vision. The online survey also included questions about how public trust and confidence in national security can be enhanced, and the role of the Treaty of Waitangi.

Feedback from the engagement process reinforced that there is an appetite for a public conversation on national security. While hui participants generally agreed that accountability for national security lies ultimately with government, they also clearly saw a role for themselves and different parts of society in national security.

Other key themes emerging from this engagement process included:

- government has to build trust and confidence in the national security system with the public, and this should start with enhancing the transparency and accessibility of national security information;
- beyond building knowledge and awareness, government should better resource communities and civil society, particularly Māori, to contribute to national security policy development;
- national security is built on foundations of social cohesion, wellbeing and trust;
- a strong appreciation of the complex, cross-cutting nature of national security, and concerns about the national security implications of mis and disinformation and climate change;
- consistent support for acting early to prevent escalation of threats, in light of intergenerational challenges that New Zealand faces; and
- recognition of the importance of having a Strategy that reflects New Zealand's unique identity, by acknowledging the value of te ao Māori, and recognising te Tiriti o Waitangi and our place in the Pacific.

## Long-term Insights Briefing (LTIB)

Long-term Insights Briefings are a new way for government agencies to better understand the issues that matter for the future wellbeing of New Zealanders. The Briefings are intended to be think pieces on the future, not current government policy. As such, they are developed independently of Ministers. Under the Public Service Act 2020, departments are required to publish a LTIB at least once every three years.

A briefing on national security has been developed, co-led by DPMC and MFAT on behalf of the nine Security and Intelligence Board (SIB) agencies. The topic for the National Security LTIB is 'Engaging an increasingly diverse Aotearoa New Zealand on national security risks, challenges and opportunities.'

The main purpose of the briefing is to build greater awareness and understanding among New Zealanders about national security – the risks and challenges we face, how these might change over the next 10 to 15 years, what is collectively being done about them and to share some ideas that could support a bright future for our national security.

The draft National Security LTIB went out for consultation in November 2022. This was informed by a range of public engagements throughout 2022:

- **a programme of hui and other in-person engagements.** This included with academics (including Māori academics), youth, businesses, community organisations, ethnic communities (alongside the Ministry of Ethnic Communities) and other interest groups;
- **public submission and consultation on the topic.** We received 105 submissions (written and oral) from members of the public, organisations and businesses as part of public consultation on the topic; and
- **the supporting National Security Public Survey** (see below for details).

The final LTIB will be published and tabled in Parliament for Select Committee consideration in early 2023.

## National Security Public Survey

Between February and March 2022 Aotearoa New Zealand's first National Security Public Survey was conducted to support and inform the development of the LTIB and other work such as the development of the Strategy. This independent survey of more than 1,000 people living in Aotearoa New Zealand explored what national security means to people living in New Zealand, which threats are of most concern to them, and how we can better engage. This was the first time the national security sector had engaged New Zealanders in this way. The Survey will be repeated annually.

Consistent with what we heard from the Royal Commission, survey findings indicated there is an opportunity to share more information with the public to support open debate on national security and increase understanding of possible roles and responsibilities for keeping New Zealand safe and secure.

We published the 2022 National Security Survey Report in November 2022 alongside the National Security LTIB going out for public consultation.

## Other public engagements and hui

Officials have also undertaken public engagement specific to a small set of national security challenges. Of note this includes public kōrero and hui to support the development of an Aotearoa Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) Strategic Framework, He Whenua Taurikura Hui 2022 – Aotearoa New Zealand's second hui on countering terrorism and violent extremism,

and s6(a)

This is in addition to the ongoing public engagement efforts specific to government's response to the Royal Commission.

Proactively Released