

A MESSAGE FROM CHIEF OF ARMY



I sincerely hope you all had a good break over Christmas, you had the opportunity to share some quality time with those who matter, and that you're in a good space to start the year.

I really enjoyed the opportunity towards the end of last year to visit all the camps and bases and present Army 2025 – our plan for the next five years. I received some great feedback, both in terms of the questions that were asked and the comments provided, but also very positive support for where we are going as an Army. Our challenge is now to deliver on the people, information, capability enhancement and relationships outcomes captured in Army 2025 – and I am determined we will.

Additionally though, there are three other key areas where we will also focus effort in 2020. These are: The Future Fight; Army Resilience; and, Output Delivery. Let me expand on what I mean.

The Future Fight. In a couple of fora just prior to Christmas, particularly now that Army 2025 has been landed, I spoke of the need for Army to update our thinking around the Army After Next. Of the need to revisit The Future Land Operating Concept and to further develop our understanding of not only the future land operating environment but, in a New Zealand context, what is the likely requirement by both government and the NZDF of the future land force. In particular, we need to understand advancements in technology and operating concepts, including evolving domains, and we need to better understand those capabilities that the future land force will require.

Army Resilience. Having set the direction for Army through to 2025 it's important that we now both 'strengthen our base' and enhance those areas critical to our success. We need to continue to enhance our treatment of risk, and we need to strengthen our people

base through improved/targeted recruiting and by continuing to chip away at retention challenges. I want to lift the conversation around our culture, particularly diversity and inclusion, with an emphasis on improving the environment/opportunities for our female soldiers – next month's CA Wananga is an important first step with this. Finally, we must continuously improve how we manage our resources to ensure we optimise their usage.

Output Delivery. Never forget that this is our core business and if we get nothing right, we get this right. It is essential we fully support/resource the land and special operations components of the NZ Army – and we do this with the view of Army both fully integrating into the joint force, and operating effectively alongside our partners and allies. Our focus must be one of continuing to set the land and special operations forces up for not only success, but to be world class.

A lot of work has been undertaken over the last couple of years to get us where we are today and Army 2025 gives great shape to our immediate future. Delivering the 2025 strategy is key and will be a real focus of our effort, no question. In conjunction with its delivery however, remaining expert at our core business, enhancing our organisational foundations, and developing our understanding of what is next are also critically important.

2020 is a year of real opportunity for Army and one we've got to grab... with both hands. Jobs on.

John Boswell
Major General



Six Deceased Recovered in Operation on Whakaari / White Island

A recovery team including six NZDF Explosive Ordnance Disposal specialists and a ground commander, with medical staff on small boats nearby recovered the bodies of six people who died when Whakaari/White Island erupted on December 9 last year.

At the time of the eruption 47 people were on the island including 38 cruise ship passengers. As at February 10 the official death toll from the eruption was 21 people, 19 of whom died in New Zealand and two in Australia. Two bodies were not recovered and have been listed as dead by the Chief Coroner.

• *Behind the scenes: the NZDF response as part of Operation White Island, page 14.*

LAIDLEY Q4341
AUSTRALIA
11 February, 2020

To whom it may concern,

Our family members, Julie and Jess Richards, perished on White Island during the eruption on December 9, 2019 and the family has asked me to write to you. Julie was one of bodies that your organisation retrieved from the island after the eruption and Jess was taken off prior to this, although we don't know how.

We will never know who you are, but we want you to know that we think you are all very brave people and we thank you so much. We know that all of you put your own lives at risk to perform this task and this is not lost to us. When this retrieval was occurring, we hoped that all of you would be safe and it was a relief to us all when it was completed successfully, and you all came home safely. We know you all must have seen things that no person should see and for this we are sorry. If we could make those memories of what you saw go away we would.

You and the nation of New Zealand should feel very proud of what you have done. You all make a difference to this world. I hope every one of you can take some comfort in these words and as you go through life you should be proud of your actions on those days.

Words cannot express our gratitude enough for your brave actions.

Thank you.

Kind Regards

Matthew & Barbara Whitehead.
For the family of Julie and Jess Richards.

