



Peace Movement Aotearoa

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Election 2023: Let's get disarmament on the agenda What do the political parties say about disarmament?

September / October 2023

This document is part of our Election 2023 disarmament resource, which has sections on what good disarmament policy would look like, disarmament questions for candidates, and links to further information - the resource is available at <http://disarm.org.nz>

Introduction

In August 2023, we sent nine questions to seven political parties (ACT, Green Party, Labour, National, NZ First, Te Pāti Māori and TOP) asking about their policies on disarmament and arms control, space launches, military spending, use of explosive weapons in populated areas, the women, peace and security agenda, climate change and military activity, autonomous weapon systems, and AUKUS.

This was necessary because none of the political parties have a comprehensive disarmament policy available in a single document, although the Green and Labour parties have some disarmament elements in their respective manifestos. To date, we have received replies from four: ACT, Green Party, Labour and National - a summary of each party's position is included below, and the full replies are available in a separate document 'Election 2023: What the political parties say' at <http://disarm.org.nz>

As discussed in our International Day of Peace 'Let's get disarmament on the agenda' [online forum](#), based on the replies received, the **Green Party** has the most points in common with our recommendations of what good disarmament policy should look like, and they share Peace Movement Aotearoa's commitment to using non-violent means to resolve conflict. However, there is some room for improvement especially around military spending and analysis of the impact of military activity on climate change, and their space launch policy could usefully include [a prohibition on any launch of military command, control, targeting or geopositioning systems](#) for weapons that are banned under New Zealand law.

Labour's reply is the most detailed and includes information about some of the disarmament policy it has developed while in government, which has indeed resulted in progress around New Zealand's support for the [Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#) and the international Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas ([EWIPA Declaration](#)), among other positive developments.

Overall however, while Labour’s disarmament policy may look good on paper, the way it has been put into practice is disappointing - especially around [space launches from Aotearoa](#), and [autonomous weapon systems](#). Also disappointing is Labour’s continued focus on maintaining combat ready armed forces [regardless of the annual cost](#), to [increase combat capability](#) over the next 15 years, their apparent interest [in joining AUKUS Pillar II](#); and their lack of commitment to a second Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan ([the first expired in 2019](#)).

National’s disarmament and arms control priorities remain somewhat obscure based on the replies received from the Leader’s office (clearly written by someone who is not working on disarmament given the reply about the [EWIPA Declaration](#) which New Zealand endorsed last year) and the lack of any visible reference to disarmament on their web site. Generally speaking, over recent years National’s disarmament priorities have been similar to Labour’s which is reflected in some of the replies to the questions, but the lack of a clear policy to hold them to account is a concern.

It seems National does intend to keep the Disarmament and Arms Control portfolio / shadow portfolio, which is good news as the position was disestablished by the National-led government in 2011 then [reinstated by Labour in 2018](#).

ACT has no disarmament policy; it supports more military “security” arrangements, and plans to increase military spending, roll-back the firearms legislation and abolish the gun registry.

What the political parties say about disarmament

Our questions (in italics) and the replies received from the ACT, Green, Labour and National parties are included below in alphabetical order; the image for each party includes the date the reply was received and the party position of the person who replied.



ACT Party, 11 September 2023
(Director Policy and Research, ACT Caucus Support Centre)

1) Disarmament policy: Does your party have a disarmament policy? a) If yes, what are the key provisions of the policy? Can you kindly attach a copy to your reply, and tell us where it can be accessed online by voters. b) If no, what is the rationale for choosing not to have a disarmament policy?

The ACT Party has no official disarmament policy.

2) Disarmament and Arms Control portfolio / shadow portfolio: a) Who is your party's spokesperson on disarmament? b) Does your party have a specific disarmament and arms control portfolio / shadow portfolio? If yes, will this continue after the election? If no, why not?

The Defence Spokesperson is James McDowall. A new spokesperson will be appointed after the election.

3) *Autonomous weapon systems:* a) *What is your party's policy on the development, production and use of autonomous weapon systems? b) Does your party support the introduction of legislation to prohibit the development, production or use of autonomous weapon systems in Aotearoa New Zealand?*

The ACT Party has no policy on autonomous weapon systems.

4) *AUKUS 'enhanced trilateral security partnership':* a) *What is your party's position on AUKUS? b) Does your party support or oppose New Zealand joining AUKUS pillar 2 and / or any other part of it?*

The ACT Party supports the AUKUS trilateral security partnership, and supports deeper cooperation with other democracies in security arrangements.

5) *Military expenditure:* *Does your party have a policy on military expenditure? a) Should the amount allocated to Vote Defence and Vote Defence Force be decreased / increased / remain at a similar level as it is now? b) What is the rationale behind your party's position on this?*

ACT Party supports an increase in defence spending to 2% of GDP. The NZDF needs significantly more resources, including responding to the low pay and high attrition rates in the NZDF. New Zealand defence spending is very low by international standards – New Zealand defence spending is \$5.3 billion (or 1.4% of GDP), while the Australian Labor government plans to spend A\$52 billion on defence (2.02% of GDP) this financial year.

Two per cent spending on GDP is the accepted threshold for democracies as a signal of their commitment to common defence of themselves, their allies, and their commitment to upholding the international rules-based order, and ACT believe that this is an appropriate spending target for the next four years.

6) *Space launches from New Zealand territory:* a) *Does your party support space launches from New Zealand territory? b) What is your party's position on the launch of payloads that include military command, control or targeting systems, or that may contribute to militarisation and / or weaponisation of space?*

Yes

7) *Use of explosive weapons in populated areas:* a) *Does your party have policy on the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas? b) If yes, how does your party intend to implement its provisions? If no, why not?*

The ACT Party has no policy on the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas.

8) *Climate change, disarmament and military activity :* a) *Does your party see a link between climate change, disarmament and military activity? b) If yes, in what way/s do you consider they are linked?*

No.

9) Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPS): a) What is your party's policy on the women, peace and security agenda? b) Does your party support the rapid development of a second New Zealand WPS National Action Plan?

ACT generally supports the UN Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

Note: there is no visible reference to disarmament on ACT's web site, but there is a page outlining [ACT's plans](#) to roll-back the firearms legislation and abolish the gun registry.



Green Party, 15 September 2023
(Correspondence and Policy Advisor)

1) Disarmament policy: Does your party have a disarmament policy? a) If yes, what are the key provisions of the policy? Can you kindly attach a copy to your reply, and tell us where it can be accessed online by voters. b) If no, what is the rationale for choosing not to have a disarmament policy?

Yes, The Green Party has a Defence and Peacekeeping Policy and a Global Affairs Policy. The Green Party is committed to the values of peace, non-violence, justice and environmental protection, and these are core to our policy positions on global affairs and defence.

Disarmament is addressed specifically at point 2.4 of our Defence and Peacekeeping Policy, which supports the phase out and opposes the development of weapons that create particular long lasting risks to civilians and/or the environment, such as nuclear, cluster bombs, landmines and biological and chemical weapons.

It is further addressed at points 4.10 and 4.11 of our Global Affairs policy, which supports the completion of treaties banning the manufacture, sale and use of inhumane weapons, and global denuclearisation.

Our complete party policy can be found here:
https://www.greens.org.nz/policy_complete_party

2) Disarmament and Arms Control portfolio / shadow portfolio: a) Who is your party's spokesperson on disarmament? b) Does your party have a specific disarmament and arms control portfolio / shadow portfolio? If yes, will this continue after the election? If no, why not?

Golriz Ghahraman is the Green Party spokesperson for defence and foreign affairs. These portfolios cover a range of policy areas essential to promoting peace and justice and upholding human rights globally, including policies supporting disarmament.

3) Autonomous weapon systems: a) What is your party's policy on the development, production and use of autonomous weapon systems? b) Does your party support the introduction of

legislation to prohibit the development, production or use of autonomous weapon systems in Aotearoa New Zealand?

The Green Party is committed to international law banning the manufacture, sale and use of all inhumane weapons, including AWS. AWS present a significant risk to international peace and human rights, and are incompatible with New Zealand's long held commitment to disarmament.

The Green Party believes that New Zealand should lead by example to pass domestic law banning autonomous weapons, and advocate for our friends and allies to do the same.

4) AUKUS 'enhanced trilateral security partnership': *a) What is your party's position on AUKUS? b) Does your party support or oppose New Zealand joining AUKUS pillar 2 and / or any other part of it?*

The Green Party stands firmly against New Zealand joining AUKUS, to maintain our independent, nuclear-free and Pacific-centred position on the world stage. The Government's exploration of joining Pillar 2 of AUKUS does not align with New Zealand's strong position against militarisation of the Pacific, and our legal and moral commitment to a nuclear-free Pacific.

5) Military expenditure: *Does your party have a policy on military expenditure? a) Should the amount allocated to Vote Defence and Vote Defence Force be decreased / increased / remain at a similar level as it is now? b) What is the rationale behind your party's position on this?*

Aotearoa New Zealand's Defence Force should be sufficiently resourced to fulfil their roles, including peacekeeping, rescue and disaster relief and border control. However, the Green Party would review the structure and governance of the NZDF to look at what functions can be carried out by civilian agencies or put under joint military/ civilian control, which may lead to the re-allocation of money currently allocated to the NZDF.

6) Space launches from New Zealand territory: *a) Does your party support space launches from New Zealand territory? b) What is your party's position on the launch of payloads that include military command, control or targeting systems, or that may contribute to militarisation and / or weaponisation of space?*

Weaponising space is not in our national interest and goes against our international commitments to ensuring peace in space. The Green Party would prohibit the launch of all military hardware from Aotearoa New Zealand.

7) Use of explosive weapons in populated areas: *a) Does your party have policy on the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas? b) If yes, how does your party intend to implement its provisions? If no, why not?*

The Green Party rejects the use of weapons that create particular long-lasting risks to civilian populations, and welcomed the Declaration, which strengthens the protection of civilians from the devastating and unnecessary harm caused by explosive weapons in populated areas. We would review policy on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas to ensure that it is strong enough.

8) Climate change, disarmament and military activity : a) Does your party see a link between climate change, disarmament and military activity? b) If yes, in what way/s do you consider they are linked?

The Green Party recognises that climate change is increasingly contributing to conflict from the lack of basic resources such as food and water, because of extreme weather events that lead to scarcity of resources, declining crop yields and rising prices. These issues are now aggravating pre-existing problems to function as a ‘threat multiplier’, causing escalating cycles of humanitarian crises, political instability, forced migrations and conflicts.

The Green Party’s Defence and Peacekeeping policy focuses on building capacity in our defence force to support communities impacted by climate-induced weather events, including in hotspots of instability and conflict.

9) Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPS): a) What is your party's policy on the women, peace and security agenda? b) Does your party support the rapid development of a second New Zealand WPS National Action Plan?

We support the WPS and support the development of a second action plan to follow the 2015-2019 iteration.

Note: Disarmament is covered in the Green Party [Manifesto](#) under the ‘Global Affairs & Trade’ heading, page 20



1) Disarmament policy: Does your party have a disarmament policy? a) If yes, what are the key provisions of the policy? Can you kindly attach a copy to your reply, and tell us where it can be accessed online by voters. b) If no, what is the rationale for choosing not to have a disarmament policy?

- Labour is proud of the nuclear free legislation it passed in Government in 1987
- We remain committed to the achievement of a world without nuclear weapons - New Zealand's nuclear-free position is long-standing and it's not going to change
- Nothing has changed in the external environment to cause Labour to change its mind on the wisdom of New Zealand's nuclear free status
- Our advocacy for nuclear disarmament has continued at the UN, at all meetings of Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and – most recently – in our promotion of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.
- Nuclear weapons are a core priority for New Zealand’s disarmament strategy, and indeed for our wider foreign policy. But achieving their elimination is by no means our only focus. We are also strong supporters of efforts to ensure a world free of all other weapons of mass destruction.
- Our engagements with our international partners helps keep our energy and ambition levels high, and are a constant reminder of how widely our disarmament aspirations are shared.

Our cooperation is more important than ever, given the magnitude of the challenges we face across the disarmament portfolio and the limited resources we have to hand. We are not powerless or without agency, and will continue to strive towards our disarmament objectives.

- Our disarmament agenda sees New Zealand operate across a number of diverse cross-regional coalitions involving states, international organisations and civil society partners.
- What we really need, of course, is for the nuclear weapon states to step up and play their part - to stop citing the current international security as a reason why disarmament cannot be achieved and instead see it as we do – namely as an urgent call to action. The stakes are too high to do otherwise.

2) Disarmament and Arms Control portfolio / shadow portfolio: a) *Who is your party's spokesperson on disarmament?* b) *Does your party have a specific disarmament and arms control portfolio / shadow portfolio? If yes, will this continue after the election? If no, why not?*

Hon Nania Mahuta is the Minister of Disarmament and Arms Control. This portfolio will continue following the election.

3) Autonomous weapon systems: a) *What is your party's policy on the development, production and use of autonomous weapon systems?* b) *Does your party support the introduction of legislation to prohibit the development, production or use of autonomous weapon systems in Aotearoa New Zealand?*

- Minister of Disarmament and Arms Control Phil Twyford announced in 2021 that New Zealand would push for new international law to ban and regulate autonomous weapons systems (AWS) - <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2021-11/Autonomous-Weapons-Systems-Cabinet-paper.pdf>
- While the evidence suggests fully autonomous weapons systems are not yet being deployed on the battlefield, the prospect of a future where the decision to take a human life is delegated to machines is abhorrent and inconsistent with New Zealand's interests and values
- As signalled in our disarmament strategy, we have confirmed New Zealand's support for new, legally-binding prohibitions, rules and limits on AWS, following an inclusive process with the Defence Force and other government agencies, as well as stakeholders from outside government.
- By establishing a well-informed position on autonomous weapons, New Zealand is strongly placed to work with other nations to make the case for a new legal instrument such as a convention or treaty, including through the existing multilateral talks underway at the UN in Geneva.
- This policy also makes clear, however, that New Zealand will remain open to other opportunities to make progress, including by building and working with a coalition of states, experts and others.
- New Zealand has a proud record of prioritising humanitarian concerns and putting human rights at the heart of our foreign policy. We have successfully advocated for legally binding rules on such issues in the past, and it is time for us to do so again as we tackle this emerging area of concern.
- There is increasing awareness that the application of artificial intelligence and emerging technologies in new weapons systems raises legal, ethical and security risks if left unchecked – something acknowledged by the UN Secretary-General, the International

Committee of the Red Cross, as well as concerned tech experts, ethicists and military personnel.

- Our policy shows it is possible to address these risks while remaining consistent with our defence and security interests, including maintaining interoperability with key defence partners, and ensuring our tech sector remains able to pursue the opportunities the peaceful development of AI presents.
- This is an issue with significant implications for global peace and security, and New Zealand, alongside the international community, is well placed to push for action
- New Zealand will continue to look for opportunities to work with partners to develop and enhance the technology that underpins our military capability in a way that is consistent with our values.
- We have good engagement across a range of defence and security matters with partners in the region, including the US and the Pacific Island Forum members.
- Our position on autonomous weapons systems is well understood, and we control what happens in our own air space. Other countries' decisions about their defence capability needs are a matter for them.

4) AUKUS 'enhanced trilateral security partnership': a) *What is your party's position on AUKUS?* b) *Does your party support or oppose New Zealand joining AUKUS pillar 2 and / or any other part of it?*

- We understand the strategic drivers for AUKUS, and those partners know that New Zealand's nuclear free position is proudly long standing and it's not going to change.
- We will not be part of the AUKUS nuclear submarine arrangement, and the partners in the AUKUS arrangement understand and respect that.
- Australia, the US, and the UK all have long histories of cooperation with New Zealand when it comes to defence and security, and New Zealand will continue to look for opportunities to work with partners to develop and enhance the technology that underpins our military capability in a way that is consistent with our values.
- On Pillar 2:
 - New Zealand will remain proudly nuclear free and we will uphold our commitments under the Treaty of Rarotonga,
 - Presently it is not clear what it would mean to be involved with Pillar II

5) Military expenditure: *Does your party have a policy on military expenditure? a) Should the amount allocated to Vote Defence and Vote Defence Force be decreased / increased / remain at a similar level as it is now? b) What is the rationale behind your party's position on this?*

- Defence personnel contribute to a more peaceful and secure world both on and offshore. With climate change and an increasingly contested geo strategic environment including in our Pacific neighbourhood it is important that New Zealand has the personnel and equipment to play our part in supporting global peace and security
- Budget 2023 delivered the biggest pay increase in over a decade for defence personnel, and builds on the Government's record investments in upgrading New Zealand's military capability
- Attracting and retaining more New Zealanders into our defence force means we need to ensure that wages are competitive. This pay boost helps to achieve that.

- This increase is four times greater than any previous defence remuneration boost over the past decade. It will go a long way to address attrition issues and make defence a career of choice.
- It means 90 percent of NZDF personnel will now be paid at, or close to, market rates.
- By investing over \$419 million to boost the defence payroll we can continue to maintain, and attract, the skills, experience and expertise our personnel provide at home and abroad, as well as addressing cost of living pressures.
- We have a moral obligation to ensure our soldiers, sailors and aviators are fairly paid for the critical and often dangerous work they do, and the government takes that responsibility seriously on behalf of all New Zealanders.
- Our capital announcements bring the total amount invested in Defence to \$4.7 billion since 2017, or double what the previous government spent.

6) Space launches from New Zealand territory: a) *Does your party support space launches from New Zealand territory?* b) *What is your party's position on the launch of payloads that include military command, control or targeting systems, or that may contribute to militarisation and / or weaponisation of space?*

- In May this year, this Government launched the National Space Policy, which presents a clear and connected picture of New Zealand's space interests to the world.
- Our space sector is growing rapidly. Each year New Zealand is becoming a more and more attractive place for launches, manufacturing space-related technology and conducting space science and research
- The Policy identifies stewardship, innovation, responsibility, and partnership as key values for New Zealand in space. Harnessing these values will inform space-related engagements, policy creation and strategies across government.
- The National Space Policy is led by robust objectives of:
 - Growing an innovative and inclusive space sector
 - Protecting and advancing our national security and economic interests
 - Regulating to ensure space activities are safe and secure
 - Promoting the responsible use of space internationally
 - Modelling sustainable space and Earth environments
- This is an important milestone in our space journey as it provides an overview of New Zealand's values and objectives to guide future space-related policies and regulation.
- On payloads:
 - Placing a blanket ban on permitting payloads with military applications under the Outer Space and High-altitude Activities Act 2017 would be inconsistent with New Zealand's interests
 - However, the National Space Policy formalises the Government's existing practice of looking at military payload launches on a case-by-case basis
 - We're committed to keeping New Zealanders informed about the range of payloads launched into space, from New Zealand.
 - As part of this commitment we are releasing, on a quarterly basis, a summary of all payloads approved for launch by the Minister for Economic Development.
 - In February 2022, New Zealand signed a space defence accord with the US, Canada, the UK, Germany, France and Australia.

- In 2019, Cabinet also [approved](#) a new set of principles to strengthen the New Zealand's Space Agency regulatory function and ensure decisions about payload permits are made in the national interest
- Cabinet also agreed the following launch activities will not be allowed because they are not in New Zealand's national interest or breach New Zealand and International laws:
 - payloads that contribute to nuclear weapons programmes or capabilities,
 - payloads with the intended end use of harming, interfering with, or destroying other spacecraft, or space systems on Earth,
 - payloads with the intended end use of supporting or enabling specific defence, security or intelligence operations that are contrary to government policy,
 - and payloads where the intended end use is likely to cause serious or irreversible harm to the environment.

7) Use of explosive weapons in populated areas: a) Does your party have policy on the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas? b) If yes, how does your party intend to implement its provisions? If no, why not?

- New Zealand has been a vocal advocate against the use of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA). We have acknowledged the harm caused by the use of EWIPA and committed to action on the issue.
- We have issued statements on EWIPA at different sessions of the UN Security Council Open Debate on the Protection of Civilians in February 2013, May 2017, and in May 2019. The statements stressed the grave destruction of EWIPA, including civilian infrastructure, and the catastrophic humanitarian consequences, including displacement.
- We referred to the EWIPA at UN General Assembly First Committee in 2015, urging to explore ways to minimise harm from the use of EWIPA. We also issued a statement at the UN General Assembly First Committee Debate on Conventional Weapons in October 2016, welcoming the process for a political declaration on EWIPA. In 2017, we stressed the downstream consequences of the use of EWIPA at the UN General Assembly First Committee. New Zealand reiterated its views at the 2018 UN General Assembly First Committee.
- During the 2015 Meeting of High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), New Zealand raised concerns with the humanitarian harm caused by EWIPA. At the Preparatory Committee of the CCW in August of the same year, New Zealand also highlighted the need for states to explore ways forward to minimise this harm.
- New Zealand has endorsed many joint statements on the topic. We supported the statement by Austria to the World Humanitarian Summit Roundtable on Upholding the Norms that Safeguard Humanity, in May 2016.
- New Zealand also aligned with the World Humanitarian Summit Core Commitments to 'Uphold the Norms that Safeguard Humanity' in May 2016, including: "Commit to promote and enhance the protection of civilians and civilian objects, especially in the conduct of hostilities, for instance by working to prevent civilian harm resulting from the use of wide-area explosive weapons in populated areas, and by sparing civilian infrastructure from military use in the conduct of military operations."
- New Zealand endorsed the joint statement on EWIPA during 73th UN General Assembly First Committee in October 2018. The statement, delivered by Ireland, called attention to the

devastating and long-lasting humanitarian impact of the use of EWIPA and urging states to reverse the trend of high levels of civilian harm. New Zealand also endorsed the joint statement on EWIPA during the 74th UN General Assembly First Committee in October 2019. The statement, also delivered by Ireland, encouraged states to participate in international efforts to address the impacts of the use of EWIPA on civilians, including by working towards the creation of an international political declaration on this issue.

- New Zealand participated in the Vienna Conference on the Protection of Civilians in Urban Warfare in 2019, where it discussed mitigation strategies.

8) *Climate change, disarmament and military activity* : a) Does your party see a link between climate change, disarmament and military activity? b) If yes, in what way/s do you consider they are linked?

- New Zealand and Labour are firm supporters of disarmament
- A formative experience for New Zealand was witnessing the devastating impacts of nuclear testing in the Pacific, the legacy of which is still being felt by Pacific peoples. The tests dislocated communities and forced people from their lands and traditional ways, causing immense and inter-generational harm to human health and the environment. Addressing the legacy of historic nuclear testing must be pursued alongside efforts to ensure no one else has to endure it in future.
- Disarmament aids in global attempts to reduce climate change while fostering peace, security, and international cooperation by lowering military activity and reallocating resources towards sustainable development and environmental preservation.
- We know climate change has the potential to be a threat to peace due to a scarcity of resources

We are also driven by values like kaitiakitanga, the idea that each of us here today are guardians.

- We are guardians of the land, of our environment, and of our people
- In 2019, Labour's Defence Minister and Minister for Climate Change [announced](#) the release of a Defence Climate Change Implementation Work Plan, titled Responding to the Climate Crisis: An Implementation Plan.
 - In support of the wider New Zealand Government work programme on climate change, the Ministry of Defence and the New Zealand Defence Force have encouraged Defence forces to consider what effect climate change will have on their activities. This includes recognising the potential of climate change to increase the need for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, as a well as the potential to present security risks.
 - The impacts of climate change continue to intensify globally, and in our region, exacerbating a range of human security challenges, including community violence, biosecurity and health implications, and resource scarcity—notably around food and water shortages
 - This work plan marks the beginning of Defence's journey to better respond to the increasingly complex impacts of climate change.
 - Preparing for and responding to the intensifying impacts of climate change in the Pacific are key components of the Coalition Government's defence policy as outlined in the Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018.
 - The Defence Capability Plan 2019 released also demonstrated how Defence is striving to be a reliable and responsive partner in facing this challenge, by outlining range of investments critical to enhancing our ability to respond in the Pacific. These include

enhanced sealift and airlift capabilities, improved aerial surveillance and maritime domain awareness, as well as increasing the size of the New Zealand Army.

- Defence plays a key role in supporting the Government to respond and enhance its understanding of the security implications of climate change
- Following on from the 2018 Climate Change Defence Assessment, this implementation plan is another important addition to the work underway to both mitigate and adapt to climate change
- The passing of the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act in November was a crucial milestone to help ensure a safer planet for future generations
- Climate change is challenging our region and Defence has positioned itself to be able to support the Government in responding to the impacts of climate change as they arise
- Some of the countries most vulnerable to climate change are also the least well equipped to respond to its worsening impacts. New Zealand needs to be ready to play its part by ensuring humanitarian support is available when it's needed

9) Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPS): a) What is your party's policy on the women, peace and security agenda? b) Does your party support the rapid development of a second New Zealand WPS National Action Plan?

- New Zealand is committed to implementing United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security. We work to advance the Women, Peace and Security agenda at home and abroad. [New Zealand's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security](#) (WPS) assessed how New Zealand could implement the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions on Women, Peace and Security. Alongside this, in 2019 we co-hosted the [Women Peace and Security Summit](#) with Samoa, which was convened to support the promotion and implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 and complementary resolutions, as well as action under the Boe Declaration of Regional Security, endorsed by Pacific Islands Forum Leaders in 2018.
- Minister Carmel Sepuloni attended the event, and participants recognised the importance of a Blue Pacific approach to addressing the WPS agenda. The Blue Pacific concept and its principle of collectivism, informed and guided the discussions. The Blue Pacific concept is based on the idea that the Pacific Ocean and its island nations are not just a collection of individual states but a single, interconnected entity that is united by shared geography, culture, and challenges. This Summit contributed to the ongoing regional conversation on security and gender equality. Participants recognised that existing regional frameworks provide mechanisms through which to progress Women, Peace and Security objectives in the region.
- The Summit highlighted that while positive progress has been made in several aspects relating to the WPS agenda; much more work needs to be done. There was also a wealth of information on successful initiatives; lessons learnt; continuing challenges and recommendations for addressing ongoing challenges. We continue to strive towards bolstering the Women, Peace and Security agenda, and prioritising women in everything we do.

Note: Since this reply was received, the Labour Party [Manifesto](#) was released - disarmament is covered on pages 65 and 66, within the 'Our place in the world' section (pages 64 to 66).

1) Disarmament policy: Does your party have a disarmament policy? a) If yes, what are the key provisions of the policy? Can you kindly attach a copy to your reply, and tell us where it can be accessed online by voters. b) If no, what is the rationale for choosing not to have a disarmament policy?

National in Government would follow a similar approach to disarmament as the current Government. Previous governments in New Zealand have taken a nearly bipartisan position on this.

National was invited to attend a conference at the United Nations last year on disarmament with the Minister for Disarmament. While we were unable to attend, the delegation went with our very best wishes.

2) Disarmament and Arms Control portfolio / shadow portfolio: a) Who is your party's spokesperson on disarmament? b) Does your party have a specific disarmament and arms control portfolio / shadow portfolio? If yes, will this continue after the election? If no, why not?

Our party spokesperson for disarmament is Hon Gerry Brownlee.

It would be National's intention for there to be a minister who would have that responsibility.

3) Autonomous weapon systems: a) What is your party's policy on the development, production and use of autonomous weapon systems? b) Does your party support the introduction of legislation to prohibit the development, production or use of autonomous weapon systems in Aotearoa New Zealand?

National does not have a specific policy relating to autonomous weapon systems but we will continue to stay up to date with developments in that area.

4) AUKUS 'enhanced trilateral security partnership': a) What is your party's position on AUKUS? b) Does your party support or oppose New Zealand joining AUKUS pillar 2 and / or any other part of it?

New Zealand is a nuclear free country and will continue to be so under any future National Government. AUKUS pillar two has not been defined. We note that the current Government has approved officials to engage in discussions of what it might be, but there has to be no commitment from them, and there is no commitment from us.

5) Military expenditure: Does your party have a policy on military expenditure? a) Should the amount allocated to Vote Defence and Vote Defence Force be decreased / increased / remain at a similar level as it is now? b) What is the rationale behind your party's position on this?

National's focus is on outcomes, and ensuring New Zealand has a credible, capable and interoperable defence force. First and foremost, National considers we need to rebuild the economy so we can afford the public services Kiwis deserve, like the defence force.

6) Space launches from New Zealand territory: a) Does your party support space launches from New Zealand territory? b) What is your party's position on the launch of payloads that include military command, control or targeting systems, or that may contribute to militarisation and / or weaponisation of space?

Yes, we do support space launches from New Zealand and we will want to be part of any international agreements around payloads that may be on rockets sent into orbit.

7) Use of explosive weapons in populated areas: a) Does your party have policy on the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas? b) If yes, how does your party intend to implement its provisions? If no, why not?

National considers there is no chance that such a declaration would pass the veto of the Security Council. Ironically one of the members who has veto power is currently the aggressor against Ukraine in that illegal war.

8) Climate change, disarmament and military activity : a) Does your party see a link between climate change, disarmament and military activity? b) If yes, in what way/s do you consider they are linked?

National is committed to meeting our climate change targets, including net zero by 2050.

This will be achieved by reducing emissions right across the economy – primarily driven by putting a price on carbon through the Emissions Trading Scheme. The New Zealand Defence Force has identified that climate change is a live issue for which they need to make adjustments.

9) Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPS): a) What is your party's policy on the women, peace and security agenda? b) Does your party support the rapid development of a second New Zealand WPS National Action Plan?

Not answered.

Note: there is no visible reference to disarmament on National's web site.
