|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Hon Ron Mark**  **Minister for Veterans**  **Minister of Defence** | **cid:image001.png@01D3B6EC.0AE0FB50** |
| **18 May 2020** | **MEDIA STATEMENT** |
| **Is it time to further recognise those who serve in our military?**  Minister for Veterans Ron Mark has announced the launch of a national conversation that aims to find out whether New Zealanders think there should be a formal agreement between service people, the Government, and the people of New Zealand.  “This year marks the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II. New Zealanders recently demonstrated their support for our military service personnel by standing in their driveways in a show of respect this Anzac Day. But we want to know if New Zealanders think we should do more for those who serve our country,” said Ron Mark.  “Military personnel are, or have been, part of a unique environment and culture - one where there are extraordinary aspects to their service. While serving New Zealand, they do not have all the rights and freedoms of other citizens. They accept that they may be placed in harms’ way.  “Research indicates that service can have negative impacts on their health and wellbeing, and that some face difficulties in transitioning to civilian life. They can spend long periods away from their whānau, which can affect whānau wellbeing.  The survey asks New Zealanders about recognition and support for service personnel, and what they think about establishing a formal agreement, or a Kawenata.  “Prominent examples of a Kawenata or Covenant, in overseas jurisdictions are the Armed Forces Covenant in the United Kingdom, and the Australian Defence Veterans’ Covenant, and I believe they have demonstrated significant benefit for veterans and their families,” said Ron Mark.  “Cabinet agreed that the Veterans’ Advisory Board undertake a national conversation with New Zealanders about the possibility of establishing such a Kawenata here.  “A Kawenata could provide additional recognition for the service our military personnel have given our nation, or support for their wellbeing and that of their whānau,” said Ron Mark.  The aim of the survey is to ensure all New Zealanders have the chance to have their say. I encourage all those with a view on how our military personal should be treated to participate,” said Ron Mark.  The survey is available at [missionfeedback.co.nz](http://missionfeedback.co.nz/) and is open until 7 June 2020.  **Media Contact:** Toni Hartley  **Related Documents**   * [VAB Interim Report.pdf](http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2019-12/VAB%20Interim%20Report.pdf)1.06 MB * [TOR for VAB - December 2019.pdf](http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2019-12/TOR%20for%20VAB%20-%20December%202019.pdf)672.92 KB | |