



Te Kiwi Māia: The Courageous Kiwi

A place for New Zealand's first responders and Defence Force personnel.

While in the United Kingdom, Royal New Zealand Navy Reservist Rebecca Nelson heard about Tedworth House and the Help for Heroes charity. It is a support organisation for UK Defence Force personnel and wondered if there was an equivalent in New Zealand.

“Tedworth House was there for their defence force and veterans to take a break, recover and find help. A respite from the stresses of being on the front line.”

On returning to New Zealand Rebecca Nelson, Megan Marshali and James Burt formed Te Kiwi Māia. A charitable trust with a mission to provide rehabilitation, recovery and respite to those, who — as a result of their role safeguarding and caring for New Zealanders — have sustained physical or psychological injuries.

“If you think of the [Christchurch] mosque shootings, and then you wonder, where did they all go afterwards?” said Rebecca.

Te Kiwi Māia is raising funds to build a homestead and farm retreat for first responders, Defence Force personnel and their families. Rebecca, Megan and James aim to create a supportive and inclusive environment, one with professional assistance, and activities that promote mental wellness.

It's a place for rebuilding physical, psychological and emotional strength.



Rebecca Nelson with the crew from the Life Flight, Westpac Rescue Helicopter.

Rebecca would like their retreat to be utilised by first responders, defence and their families. To be there for them before they reach their breaking point

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“It could be a place where the Police say to their crew, ‘Right team, we’re going to send you there for a week to decompress, to go for hikes, and be with nature’.”

While funds are being raised for the homestead, Te Kiwi Māia has organised wellness retreats for groups of 12 first responders and Defence Force personnel in Auckland, with the help of Massey University.

“Te Kiwi Māia wants to work alongside the organisations with their programmes they are currently running and help provide them with the respite option — a place where our frontline and defence force personal can focus on recharging and recovery.”

You can donate to Te Kiwi Māia through their website: www.tekiwimaia.co.nz (<https://www.tekiwimaia.co.nz>) [↗](#)

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