

UNLOCKING SUCCESS – TUKUNA TE ANGITU

NEWSLETTER



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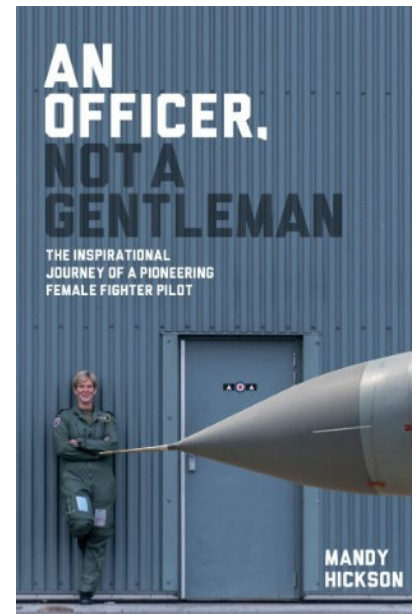
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“BELONGING TAKES FLIGHT”:**Mandy Hickson Visits RNZAF Base Auckland**

Renowned former RAF Fast Jet Pilot and bestselling author Mandy Hickson recently visited RNZAF Base Auckland, bringing with her a dynamic blend of experience, vulnerability, and inspiration that left a lasting impression on all who attended.

Hosted by the [RNZAF MENTORING PROGRAMME](#), Mandy delivered a captivating keynote to both the RNZAF and the RNZN that wasn't just about breaking the sound barrier but breaking barriers of belonging, courage, and leadership in high-pressure environments.

Mandy's journey, as chronicled in her book *An Officer, Not a Gentleman*, is not just a memoir of military aviation—it's a story of resilience, authenticity, and thriving in spaces where you weren't always expected, or even invited. Speaking to an audience of military and civilian personnel alike, Mandy shared her experiences of being one of the first women to fly fast jets on the front line with the RAF, and how those high-stakes missions taught her not just about split-second decisions, but about trust, psychological safety, and teamwork.



As Mandy reflected during her time on base, *“True leadership isn't about fitting in—it's about showing up as your authentic self and creating space for others to do the same.”* That message could not have resonated more with the kaupapa of the [RNZAF MENTORING PROGRAMME](#), which is designed not to mold people into sameness, but to elevate their uniqueness. Mandy remarked on how the program fosters a deeply human-centered culture—where mentoring isn't a checkbox but a lifeline that celebrates cognitive diversity and helps people find where they belong.

Her time at Base Auckland was hosted with warmth, curiosity, and the usual RNZAF manaakitanga (care and support) was more than just a speaking engagement. It was a mutual exchange of ideas, laughter, and insight, shared between those who understand the pressures of service life and the value of support. Mandy, her husband Craig (a fellow aviation expert), and their two sons were welcomed as whānau. In her words, they “left absolutely buzzing.”

In the spirit of the [RNZAF MENTORING PROGRAMME'S](#) commitment to inclusive leadership and lifelong growth, Mandy's visit became a powerful reinforcement of what it means to lead with courage and compassion. It also served as a reminder that mentoring is not about telling others what to do—but about listening, empowering, and helping people realize that they already belong.



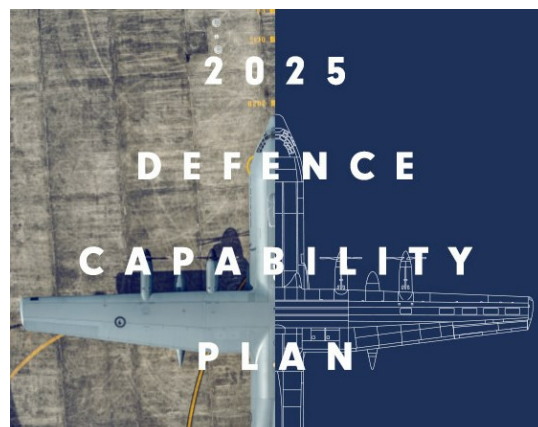
To learn more about Mandy Hickson and her powerful story, visit www.mandyhickson.com. Her bestselling book *An Officer, Not a Gentleman* is available wherever good books are sold.

The [RNZAF MENTORING PROGRAMME](#) extends its sincere thanks to Mandy and her whānau for reminding us that belonging isn't just something we talk about—it's something we live, lead, and pass on.

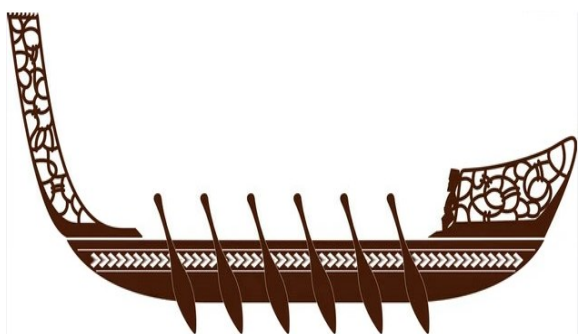
STEADY WAKA***in Shifting Tides***

In this season of restructure and uncertainty, with plans on paper and roles in motion, it's easy to feel like the tides are changing faster than our feet can find firm ground.

Recently the NZDF released its Defence Capability Plan which offers a long view or a charted course toward future readiness — yet, on the deck of daily work, many are quietly asking: *What does this mean for us? For our people? For our place?* These are not just questions of employment or logistics. These are questions of identity, connection, and purpose.



This is where the *kaupapa* (foundation) of mentoring matters more than ever. Like a waka (canoe) navigating rough seas, the [RNZAF MENTORING PROGRAMME](#) offers a steady vessel in uncertain times. A place where voices can be heard, emotions can be named, and direction can be rediscovered, not in isolation, but *tahi* (together). This is not about finding answers immediately. It is about holding space, creating safety, and reminding each other: *we are not alone in the current*.



Mentoring is more than a meeting or a model. It's a heartbeat. It's a relationship. And in times like these, mentoring conversations become our compass. They help name the questions that sit beneath the surface: *"Am I still valued?" "What might change for me? How do I prepare?" "Is it okay to feel uncertain and frustrated?"* When these questions are brought into the open, when they are spoken, shared, explored, they begin to lose their power to isolate. Mentoring creates the space where these questions are welcomed. Not rushed. Not judged. Just held.

These conversations do not solve restructure. They soften it. They do not control the future. They help us face it, *tū kotahi*, standing together. As the whakataukī (Māori Proverb) reminds us:

He waka eke noa – we are all in this waka together.

Belonging doesn't come from having a title on a door. It comes from being seen, heard, and valued. That's what mentoring provides. A place to reflect, a person to journey with, and a reminder that we are part of something bigger than the chaos around us.

We may not control the waves, the wind, or the policies. But we can paddle together. We can steer with compassion. We can steady each other. So in the coming weeks, as conversations grow louder and emotions rise quietly beneath the surface, let the mentoring space be a beacon of light, a tautoko (support), a reminder that *community is not cancelled by change*.

This is still about people. It is still about purpose. It is still about *whanaungatanga* — connection, care, and collective strength. Let's hold fast. Let's hold each other.

For those across Aotearoa New Zealand and around the world who follow the [RNZAF MENTORING PROGRAMME](#), here are some useful links to help understand the broader context:

[NZDF DEFENSE CAPABILITY PLAN 2025](#)

[NZDF PROPOSED CUTS](#)



CORRECTION WHAKATIKATIKA**W/O Guy Lipsham**

The [RNZAF MENTORING PROGRAMME](#) prides itself on fostering a culture rooted in respect, excellence, and attention to detail. It is in this spirit that we issue a sincere apology and correction regarding a recent error in our January 2025 newsletter article titled *"TOGETHER—PUĀWAI."*

In that article, we warmly welcomed our new Warrant Officer of the Air Force (WOAF), Warrant Officer Guy Lipsham, to his new role as our key sponsor and champion of the [RNZAF MENTORING PROGRAMME](#).

Regrettably, his name was incorrectly spelled as "WO Lipson." We deeply regret this oversight and apologies unreservedly to W/O Lipsham. W/O Guy "Lips" Lipsham is not only a respected leader but also a passionate advocate for mentoring within the RNZAF. It is important that we honour his name and contribution with the accuracy and dignity that reflects our high standards and the mana of his position.

This serves as a timely reminder that the smallest details matter—names carry whakapapa, identity, and pride. Let this be a call to us all to continue striving for excellence in everything we do, including how we communicate and acknowledge the leaders among us.

Thank you, W/O Lipsham, for your understanding, and more importantly, for your continued leadership as we navigate this exciting chapter together.

**A LEGACY OF QUIET STRENGTH: WHAKARERETANGA****Remembering WO Lynda Garrod**

The [RNZAF MENTORING PROGRAMME](#) mourns the loss and celebrates the legacy of Warrant Officer Lynda Garrod, mentor, leader, friend.

Lynda was more than a participant in our program; she was its heartbeat for many years. A proud member of the Auckland Mentoring Advisory Team (MAT), Lynda worked tirelessly behind the scenes to shape and strengthen our mentoring culture throughout the RNZAF. Whether proofreading documents, setting up logistics for workshops or assisting in creating matching systems that are still in use today; her fingerprints and legacy are all over the program.

But beyond the tasks, it was her people-first spirit that defined her. Lynda welcomed new MAT members with warmth and wisdom, modeling the values of service and care we hold dear. She offered guidance formally and informally, always committed to helping others "unlock success"—the very mission of our program.

She was the kind of mentor you could call on for anything, and many of us did. Her legacy lives on in the systems she built, the mentees she empowered, and the culture of kindness she quietly cultivated. We remember her not only for what she did, but for who she was: a steadfast presence, a mentor in every sense of the word.

"Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini."

My strength is not that of a single warrior, but that of many



RENEWING ACCREDITATION WHAKAMŌHOU**Upholding Excellence Together**

The **RNZAF MENTORING PROGRAMME** has officially begun the renewal process for our European Quality Award (EQA) and International Standards for Mentoring and Coaching Programmes (ISMCP) accreditations through the EMCC Global.



These internationally recognised accreditations affirm our commitment to maintaining world-class standards in mentoring and coaching. Renewal is more than just a formality, it's a vital part of the program maintaining our mana within the global mentoring community. It ensures that our program continues to meet rigorous, evidence-based standards, and that we remain aligned with best practices from around the world.



This process strengthens our reputation across the RNZAF, NZDF, and with international military and government organisations. Also, and may be more importantly, this process and accreditation assists us in living out our mission statement of leading workplace mentoring so our people can unlock and achieve success—Tukuna Te Angitu.

Additionally, these renewals help us maintain credibility, raise the bar of excellence, and foster strong relationships with global partners which opens doors to new collaborations and learning opportunities.

As we undergo this important process, we invite you to be join in and support in any way possible. Whether it's through sharing success stories, contributing to reflective practice, or providing evidence of impact, your voice matters in demonstrating the power and value of our program.

If you would like to contribute or learn more about the accreditation journey, please contact us at:

RNZAF.MENTORING@NZDF.MIL.NZ

SOCIAL MEDIA CREATOR WANTED TARUNA

The **RNZAF MENTORING PROGRAMME** continues to grow alongside our impact within our global mentoring community. With this growth, our brand needs to grow with it.

We're on the hunt for a creative and motivated *Social Media Creator* to help tell our story, amplify our voice, and inspire connection across Aotearoa New Zealand and beyond.



If you have a passion for content creation, storytelling, and digital design, this is your moment and opportunity to help us showcase the power of mentoring.

To help shape culture and connection, contact us at.

RNZAF.MENTORING@NZDF.MIL.NZ

A MENTORING EXPERIENCE **MĀTAU Ā-WHEAKO**

Picking Up the Wero

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, rau rangatira mā. Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa. Kia ora koutou e te Mentoring Programme whānau. Ko Matt Nanda ahau.

Alongside delivering safe and effective military air operations across Aotearoa New Zealand, one of the most fulfilling aspects of my RNZAF journey has been the opportunity to grow and develop the people around me. There's something deeply inspiring about talking to someone who's "in the zone" —deep in meaningful mahi, proud of who they are and who they're becoming, and lifting up those around them in the process.

Meeting and supporting the diverse individuals that make up the NZDF has always floated my boat. These drivers led me to the **RNZAF MENTORING PROGRAMME**, first as a Mentee, then as a Mentor, and eventually as part of the Mentoring Advisory Team, volunteering to help keep the engine running behind the scenes.

The program, while simple in its structure is rich with complexity when it comes to relationships. That initial kōrero (talk) with someone new often carries discomfort, but it's also where the growth happens. I'll admit, I love a good chat, especially about myself, which meant learning to truly listen was one of my biggest challenges.

Much like our family cat Lacey, who follows us around meowing constantly, that challenge never really goes away it pops up every time. But over time, I've found ways to manage it: counting silently before I speak, taking a deep breath, and setting clear intentions before each session. My tactical advice to both mentors and mentees: remember you're both human. Even the most composed leaders have an internal monologue playing. We're all working on something.



At RNZAF Base Auckland, there's been a beautiful, ongoing domino effect of volunteers stepping up since the Program's inception. I've had the privilege of being peer mentored, formally and informally, by an incredible group of people over the years. I'm a better leader because of them. Many of those individuals have gone on to do amazing things. I want to acknowledge one of our matua (founder), Colin Edie, who first invited me into the fold. And to the many others whose shoulders we now stand upon, though I won't name you here, thank you for your service and your selfless contribution to this kaupapa. (policy)
Kua takoto te mānuka – the leaves of the mānuka have been laid.

In my current role, I'm reminded every day that true safety isn't built on forms or regulations, it's built on trust, compassion, and connection. The **RNZAF MENTORING PROGRAMME** fosters those very qualities, helping people find the best in themselves and each other.

This program will continue to thrive as long as we each keep picking up the wero. Ngā mihi arohanui to all past, present, and future members of our mentoring whānau.

Matt Nanda
Director Air Force Safety & Health



TECHNIQUE NGĀ TĀERA

Providing a unique way of growing and connecting within your mentoring relationship

Reframing: Changing the Lens, Changing the Outcome

Reframing is a powerful mentoring and coaching technique that invites both mentors and mentees to look at a situation from a new perspective, much like changing the lens on a camera to capture a clearer or more hopeful picture.

Originally used in cognitive behavioural coaching, reframing helps to challenge limiting beliefs, shift negative thinking, and turn perceived failures into valuable learning opportunities. In mentoring relationships, this technique supports a growth mindset and encourages deeper, more constructive dialogue.

Reframing doesn't ignore reality, it reshapes how we interpret it. It helps mentors respond with empathy while still empowering the mentee to see new possibilities in what may feel like roadblocks.

Try asking these reframing-focused questions in your next session:

- “What’s another way to look at this situation?”
- “How would someone you admire view this problem?”

When we reframe challenges, we create space for resilience, insight, and creativity to emerge. This simple yet transformative technique strengthens the mentoring bond and reinforces that growth often begins with a shift in perspective.

Look again—you might just see the breakthrough waiting to happen.



RESOURCE WHAKAIPURANGI

Providing outside resources to help improve your skills and find further inspiration.

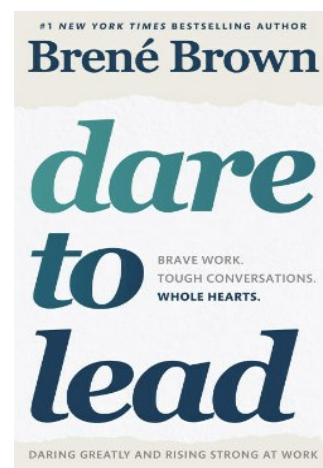
Dare to Lead – Brené Brown

***Dare to Lead* by Dr. Brené Brown**—a must-read for anyone involved in mentoring, coaching, or leadership. Grounded in years of research on vulnerability, courage, and empathy, this book offers a refreshing take on what it truly means to lead and support others with authenticity.

Brown explores how brave leadership is built not on perfection, but on connection. Her insights challenge mentors and mentees alike to “rumble with vulnerability,” have courageous conversations, and show up with clarity and compassion. One of the standout lessons—“*Clear is kind. Unclear is unkind.*”—reminds us how essential honest, direct communication is in creating safe, trust-filled mentoring spaces.

For those in military and high-performance environments, *Dare to Lead* offers a practical and human-centred approach to leadership that aligns powerfully with our values of service, integrity, and growth.

Whether you're looking to grow as a mentor or develop greater self-awareness as a leader, this resource provides tools, language, and inspiration to help you lead—and mentor—with heart and courage.



MOMENTUM, MANA, AND MĀTAURANGA TE HAERENGA KI TE ANGITU

2025 has launched with renewed energy, deepened connections, and a powerful sense of purpose within the [RNZAF MENTORING PROGRAMME](#). March and April have been packed with engagement and growth, reflecting our commitment to strengthening mentoring across the RNZAF and wider NZDF whānau.



In March, over 40 personnel throughout the NZDF took part in our Foundation Mentoring Workshops in Auckland, Ohakea, and Wellington, developing essential skills to mentor with clarity, empathy, and intent. We also continued to deliver targeted professional development workshops, both online and in-person, helping teams and units across the NZDF grow in areas such as courageous conversations, active listening, and psychological safety.

So far, April featured a major highlight: a visit from Mandy Hickson, former RAF fast jet pilot and globally recognised leadership speaker. Her inspiring kōrero reminded us all:

*“When we create a culture of support and belonging, we allow others to soar.
Mentoring isn’t a side task—it’s a leadership imperative.”*

LOOKING AHEAD, the [RNZAF MENTORING PROGRAMME](#) is excited to offer the following opportunities in the next few months to assist in growing networks and skillsets while enhancing feelings of belonging.

MONTH	EVENTS	LOCATIONS
7,8,9 MAY	ADVANCED PRACTITIONER WORKSHOP	WLGN
15 APRIL, 20 MAY	LUNCH AND LEARN	OHAKA
3 JUNE	PD: PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILLS	AKL
JULY	FOUNDATION COURSE	ONLINE

The [RNZAF MENTORING PROGRAMME](#) is also proud to offer tailored professional development workshops for teams and units across the NZDF. These workshops cover essential topics such as *active listening, building high-performing teams, understanding feedback, dealing with change, public presenting skills, and creating a coaching and mentoring culture*. Customization is available to suit your unique needs, ensuring the most meaningful and impactful experience.

*Whāia te iti kahurangi, ki te tuohu koe, me he maunga teitei.
Pursue that which is precious—should you bow, let it be to a lofty mountain.*

CONTACT US TŪTAKITAKI

If you have any questions or like to learn more about the RNZAF MENTORING PROGRAMME, feel free to contact the program manager or any of the Mentoring Advisory Teams (MAT).

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