



# Briefing to the Incoming Minister

April 2026



**Te Kawa Mataaho**  
Public Service Commission



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# 1. Executive summary

This briefing provides an overview of your Public Service portfolio and ministerial role. It discusses opportunities to ensure the Public Service can make the best possible contribution to the lives of New Zealanders. The briefing also identifies matters requiring attention in the next six months, and outlines the structure, functions, budget, and leadership team of Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission (the Commission).

As a central agency, the Commission exists to support you in your role as Minister, and the functions and structure of the Commission reflect the statutory responsibilities set out in the Public Service Act 2020. We have included information about the structure of the Public Service, the general scope of the portfolio and the respective roles of the Minister and Commissioner in the appendices, along with details of the Commission's functions, resource allocation, structure, funding, and leadership team. A major theme of the Public Service portfolio is leadership: leadership of the Public Service, the appointment and performance of leaders across the Public Service, and the development of leadership capability for the future. Equally important is integrity. Integrity is foundational for the Public Service and ensuring high standards of conduct and behaviour is therefore a major focus of the portfolio. The portfolio includes responsibility for oversight of the performance of departments, including their ability to achieve the Government's priorities, and the efficiency of their operations. Finally, there is a strong focus on the Public Service workforce – on skills, capability, pay, workforce size and employment relations.

We consider that there are opportunities now to lead change toward a Public Service that is:

- unified, digital-first, and focused on delivering better outcomes for all New Zealanders;

- simpler, smarter, and more connected, where people and businesses can access services seamlessly;
- a magnet for the best and brightest, where talented people are inspired to make a difference and proud to belong;
- ethical and trustworthy, maintaining standards of conduct and behaviour that New Zealanders expect; and
- fiscally sustainable, responsive, and designed around needs of those it serves.

To this end, we recommend a range of changes to the operating model for the system, and a strengthening of our focus on integrity, ethics and anti-corruption measures. There are also actions that can be taken to ensure the sustainability of agencies by managing agency performance and the Public Service workforce. These opportunities are discussed in Section 2.

Specific issues that will need attention over the next six months are discussed in Section 3. One of these, and a key focus for the Commission, is this year's general election. Our job is to ensure that standards of conduct are upheld and that public servants understand their ongoing obligations regarding political neutrality. Following the election, the Commissioner may also be asked to facilitate provision of information from the Public Service to parties involved in negotiations to form a government.

Other issues that will need attention over the next six months include legislative changes, integrity matters, machinery of government changes, chief executive (CE) appointments, and oversight of employment relations activities.

## 2. Strategic opportunities and challenges

The Public Service exists to support current and successive governments to set and achieve ambitious goals. We know from the Public Service Census that public servants are highly motivated and committed to achieving outcomes and making a difference for New Zealanders. This is an invaluable asset for driving high performance, and the Commission exists to support you in harnessing this motivation to achieve the Government's objectives.

Part of the Commission's role is to provide you with strategic advice on the challenges facing the portfolio and the opportunities for you to drive changes that will build the performance, resilience, and sustainability of the Public Service system. The Commission works with other central agencies – The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, The Treasury, the Ministry for Regulation and the Social Investment Agency – to oversee the structure of government and how it works, steward the machinery of government, and coordinate and manage Public Service performance.

This section outlines the current opportunities in three major areas:

- Transforming the **operating model** for the Public Service.
- Strengthening **integrity and ethics**, and safeguarding against **corruption** risks.
- Ensuring **sustainable agencies** by managing agency performance and the Public Service workforce.

Taken together, the changes contribute to a vision for a Public Service that is:

- unified, digital-first, and focused on delivering better outcomes for all New Zealanders;
- simpler, smarter, and more connected, where people and businesses can access services seamlessly;
- a magnet for the best and brightest, where

talented people are inspired to make a difference and proud to belong;

- ethical and trustworthy, maintaining high standards of conduct and behaviour, as New Zealanders expect; and
- fiscally sustainable, responsive, and designed around the needs of those it serves.

### Transforming the operating model

The system currently operates with a model put in place in the 1980s and 90s, which is highly decentralised and has a default setting of each agency working on its own. This results in a system that is difficult for New Zealanders to navigate, and which does not deliver outcomes as well as it should. Our operating model is now outdated and limiting our progress. We need to shift our focus and the way we organise, to ensure that citizens are at the centre of what we do, delivering services people can rely on through efficient use of taxpayer dollars. The Commission has identified three key directions for change.

#### *Structural rationalisation*

One of the problems with the current operating model is that it creates too many agencies that are often too small to perform to expectations or to be sustainable in the longer term. This also contributes to challenges coordinating activity across agencies.

Addressing this problem involves a reduction in the number of discrete agencies over time, achieved by grouping related agencies in a way that allows them to share functions, reduce costs and collaborate more closely. This approach would leverage economies of scale, for example, with shared IT platforms and aligned investment, or with the best use of scarce skills and expertise. The recently established Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport (MCERT) is a model for how we achieve this shift over the next three to five years (see detailed discussion in Section 3).

## Digital transformation

The second problem area in our operating model is slow and uncoordinated uptake of new technology, with AI as a major case in point. Digital services are key to improved citizen experience, providing simplified, seamless and connected transactional services (e.g. in comparable jurisdictions like Singapore). The solution therefore involves a shift to centralised digital investment and procurement, shared platforms, and AI-enabled services.

Cabinet agreed a future Digital Government Target State in December 2025, setting a new, more centralised approach to government digital investment, procurement, infrastructure and delivery. Notably, this includes the establishment of agency digital clusters to logically group agencies to share ICT platforms and systems.

The Government Digital Delivery Agency has been established to drive this change (see detailed discussion in Section 3).

## Talent development

People are the most important resource for improving services to New Zealanders, which means we need an active focus on developing and retaining the right people and capabilities. But we currently do not have a coordinated approach to developing the skills of the Public Service workforce and approaches and priorities vary greatly from agency to agency.

We need to invest in workforce capability, including by upskilling leaders and attracting top talent. That is why we have been working with CEs across the system to improve talent management for our top Public Service leaders.

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## Integrity, ethics and corruption

Public Service integrity requires individual public servants and agencies to act consistently with the ethical framework that guides us (including the purpose, principles and values in the Public Service Act, and the recent new Code of Conduct

for the public sector) and uphold the public interest over individual or private interests.

Our strategic vision for integrity has two objectives: clear and unified adoption of our shared standards of behaviour at all levels; and continuous improvement in how agencies embed and demonstrate integrity in practice. This will help drive trust in government and deliver economic benefits by ensuring the smooth delivery of public services and protecting against corruption.

The Commission's core functions include promoting integrity, transparency, and accountability. Legislative tools that support the delivery of this function include an ability to set minimum standards of integrity and conduct, issue guidance, provide advice in particular cases, and undertake investigations (see Section 3) as necessary.

The Commission's first action plan to strengthen integrity (agreed in May 2025) has four areas of priority: resetting expected standards of behaviour, improving conflict of interest identification and management, simplifying and improving complaints management, and reducing corruption and fraud. New reporting requirements in the Public Service Amendment Bill will provide additional information about the outcomes of misconduct and serious misconduct investigations across the system.

In August 2025, Cabinet agreed that the action plan to strengthen integrity should guide the development and content of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Fifth National Action Plan (NAP5), with the following commitments agreed at the end of last year:

- Produce a discussion document to support ethical career transitions between government and private sectors (see Section 3).
- Explore options to improve the transparency of senior leaders' conflict of interest.
- Undertake a practice review of the protected disclosures system.

- Develop a Corruption Risk Assessment Tool.

For the remainder of 2026, a key focus of our integrity work will be on delivering the action plan and NAP5 commitments, and leading a significant programme of work to strengthen professional practice related to the General Election (see Section 3).

## Sustainable performance

Like other comparable public services, New Zealand faces challenges in terms of rising citizen expectations and an environment of fiscal constraint, including wage and other cost pressures. A priority for the portfolio is to continue capturing gains in performance and value for money. Key functions of the Commission that contribute to this include CE performance management, and oversight of the conduct of employment relations negotiations.

Alongside other central agencies, the Commission is also involved in monitoring and providing assistance to agencies and ministers on performance issues. Recent changes aim to lift the performance of agencies by focusing them on the outcomes that Government wants, and that communities need, rather than on internal processes and imperatives. Central agency teams have been established to provide oversight of progress on clear performance objectives based on Government targets. This is further supported by new and improved performance levers:

- performance plans (led by the Treasury), which focus on delivery within fiscal constraints;
- processes to ensure interventions are in place that support agency performance, tailored to their context; and
- an ongoing programme of ‘Performance Improvement Reviews’ (discussed further in Section 3).

The Commission recently streamlined our approach to setting CE expectations to be more closely linked to delivery of the outcomes that matter most. This will be supported by new Public Service Act requirements for clarity on

the involvement of ministers in performance reviews and transparency in our overall approach to performance.

As the Minister for the Public Service, you have a role in setting the overall employment relations expectations for the public sector. This involves taking a system view, considering alignment and providing oversight across all agencies. There are a range of mechanisms that give effect to that role, discussed in Section 3.

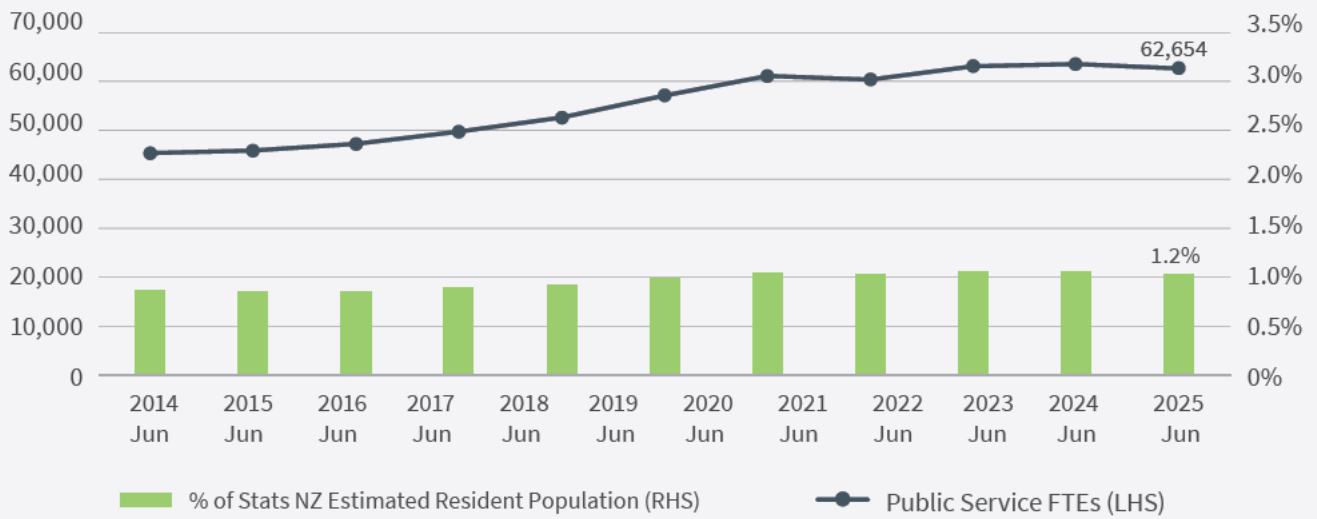
All core Public Service departments bargain under delegation from the Commissioner, and we provide close oversight to those bargaining rounds. However, the level of ministerial interest, in an environment of fiscal constraint, has led to a broadening of this traditional role to more direct involvement of the Commission in some negotiations and stronger oversight for key bargaining rounds (see Section 3).

The Commission also has a role in tracking and reporting on the overall size and composition of the Public Service workforce (see trend data on the next page). Previously we have leveraged this data to lead the implementation of government-mandated caps on the size of the Public Service workforce.

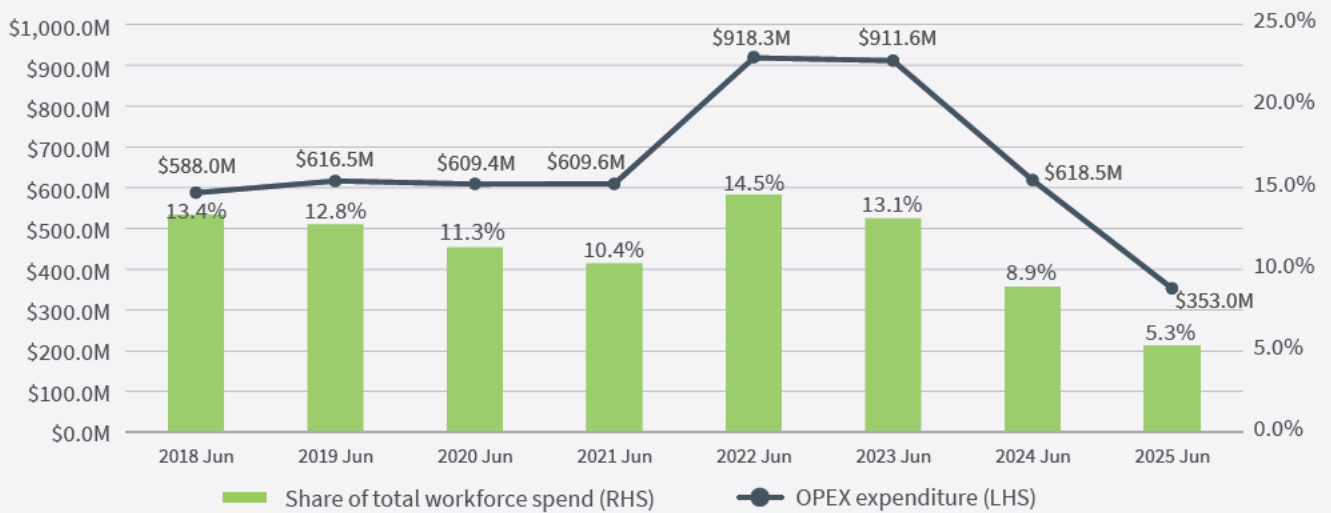
Ministers have expressed an interest in exploring levers to influence the size of the workforce, including a possible FTE target to complement their fiscal sustainability objectives. The Commission is providing further advice on this in conjunction with the Treasury.

## Key workforce data

### Public Service FTEs and share of the population

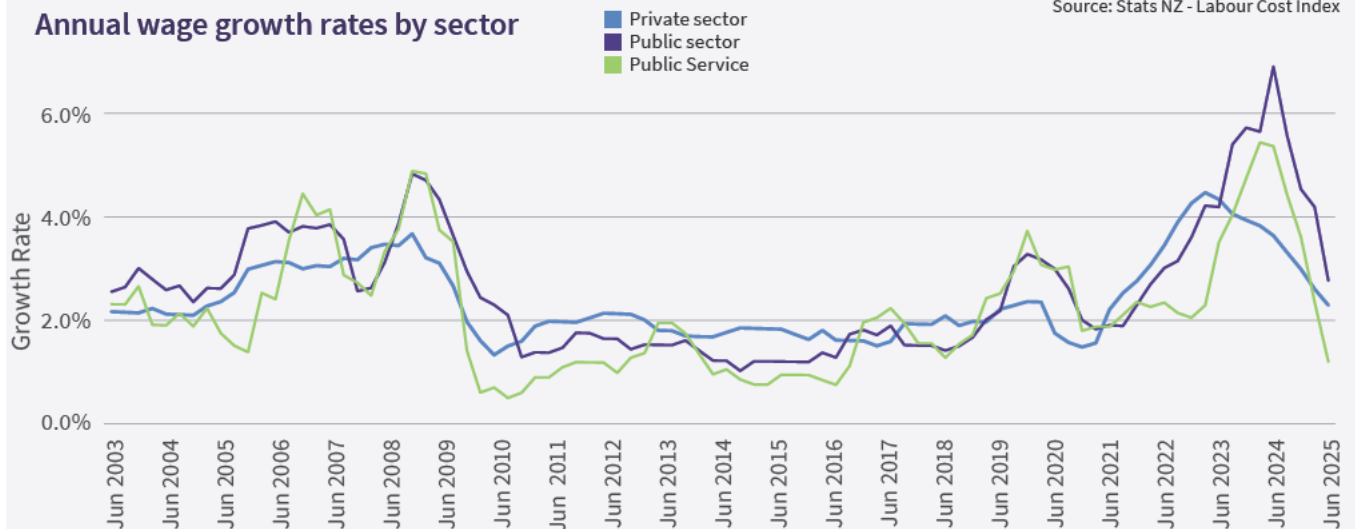


### Operational expenditure on contractors and consultants



### Annual wage growth rates by sector

Source: Stats NZ - Labour Cost Index



# 3. Matters requiring attention or awareness

## Legislative changes

Within the Public Service portfolio there are currently two bills before Parliament – the Public Service Amendment Bill, and the Plain Language Act Repeal Bill.

The Public Service Amendment Bill is at the final stages of the legislative process. We anticipate this will be complete by June 2026. Broadly, the suite of amendments seek to:

- Clarify the role of the Public Service
- Streamline chief executive responsibilities
- Reinforce the principles of political neutrality, merit-based appointments and professional competence
- Improve chief executive and agency performance management (including to ensure better oversight and transparency of Public Service conduct)
- Ensure capability in key positions that oversee common operational functions
- Provide for better management of risks to national security or the national interest.

The Plain Language Act Repeal Bill has been confirmed as category 4 for the 2026 Legislation Programme – to be passed before the 2026 General Election if possible. The Bill is currently awaiting its second reading and we will provide further material to support you on the rest of this legislative process.

## Fuel Response Plan: Public sector

To support the Government’s Fuel Response Plan, the Commission has led the development of a Public Sector Implementation Plan setting out how the public sector will maintain critical services, use fuel responsibly, and respond in a coordinated and proportionate way if conditions change.

The Plan focuses on protecting critical services, supporting economic stability, reducing avoidable demand, and strengthening readiness

across the system. It also identifies levers that could be used to support later response phases if fuel conditions tighten, and outlines governance arrangements for a CE group of higher fuel-use agencies to be led by the Commissioner.

The Commission is leading the next stage of data collection across agencies to improve visibility of fuel use, critical services, fleet composition, and key operational dependencies, and to support regular reporting and any further implementation work.

## General election

A key focus for the Commission in an election year is ensuring that expected standards of conduct are upheld and public servants understand their political neutrality obligations. The Commissioner has issued guidance setting out what is required of agencies and public servants before, during and after an election, as well as having issued a new Code of Conduct in February. We present to public servants on these expectations as part of our pre-election engagement programme to reinforce consistency.

A paper seeking Cabinet’s agreement to expectations for public sector board members standing for election is due to be lodged by 16 April. This is a routine process that has occurred every election since 1996.

Following the election, the Commissioner has a key role in facilitating access to the Public Service by political parties, to inform any negotiations to form a government.

## Machinery of government changes

Two significant machinery of government changes currently being led or co-led by the Commission support changes to the Public Service operating model.

### *Establishing the new Ministry of Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport (MCERT)*

In December 2025 Cabinet agreed to the establishment MCERT, bringing together the environment, housing and urban development, and transport ministries along with local government functions from the Department of Internal Affairs.

Minister Bishop is currently the lead minister, and you have a role in supporting the change as an exemplar of the new Public Service operating model.

MCERT was established on 1 April 2026, by Order in Council. The CE of the new Ministry has been announced and will commence in role on 27 April. The functions and staff of the foundation agencies will transfer to MCERT on 1 July 2026. The Environment (Disestablishment of the Ministry for the Environment) Amendment Bill is currently before the Environment Select Committee and is due to be reported back by 24 April 2026. It will need to be enacted and receive Royal Assent by 30 June 2026.

The work to establish MCERT is being led by a dedicated CE on assignment and supported by a team hosted at the Commission.

### *Government Digital Delivery Agency*

On 25 August 2025, Cabinet agreed that the Government Chief Digital Officer (GCDO) will lead centralised decision-making for government’s digital investment and procurement. On 10 December 2025, Cabinet endorsed the Digital Government Target State, which will consolidate government’s digital footprint to reduce costs and enable the delivery of modern, joined-up, digital services.

To lead this work, GCDO functions have been transferred from the Department of Internal Affairs to the Commission as a dedicated unit – the Government Digital Delivery Agency. The Commissioner is currently leading this function, while the process to establish a functional CE

for Digital Government (who will also be the GCDO) is ongoing. The Digital Executive Board has been disestablished as part of the transfer. The Commissioner and the GDDA will support ministers on further decisions.

### *Changes being led by other agencies*

You have a strategic role in considering structural changes within the wider system of agencies. Machinery of government changes being led by other agencies that will also require your attention in the next few months include:

- The Education System Reform Bill (currently before select committee with report back due by mid-May) will transition the **School Property Agency** from a business unit to a Crown agent from 1 August 2026. The Bill will also overhaul the governing provisions of the **Teaching Council** to give the Minister of Education increased leverage, with an Amendment Paper in development to respond to findings from two recent reports.

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- Policy decisions for a Bill to enhance the powers of the Independent Police Conduct Authority and turn it into the **Inspector-General of Police** are expected to be considered in April 2026.
- Phase 1 of the work on a **social media ban** for under-16s is being led by the Department of Internal Affairs, with new legislative powers expected this term.
- Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment is leading on a Bill to be introduced this term to split the corporate governance and regulatory powers of the **Commerce Commission**.

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## Employment relations

You have a role in setting the overall employment relations expectations for the public sector, formally issued as a Government Workforce Policy Statement under the Public Service Act 2020 (last updated in August 2024).

In response to greater ministerial interest from a cost perspective, the Commission is directly leading education bargaining (previously delegated to the Secretary for Education) and has a formal oversight role for the first time in the health and firefighting sectors (via an Order in Council). Other significant bargaining this year includes the health sector, NZ Police, and Corrections staff. The Commission is also due to report back on an internal review into social media messaging during bargaining in early 2026.

You have a role chairing the Ministerial Employment Relations Forum (MERF), which provides updates on significant bargaining and wider context. The Commission also tracks and publicly shares wage adjustments within the public sector through regular Labour Cost Index (LCI) reporting.

## Chief executive appointments

Eight Public Service CE's terms are ending in the next six months, with two substantive appointments to be made prior to the pre-election period starting on 7 August. The Commissioner has the following options when an incumbent CE's term ends:

- Run a process to appoint a new CE;
- Appoint an acting CE;
- Transfer an existing Public Service CE into the role.

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The Commission also has a role in managing the appointment of other statutory officers on behalf of ministers (e.g. the Solicitor-General, and the Deputy Police Commissioner). The Commission is currently managing one live appointment process that we are aiming to conclude prior to the pre-election period. We will provide you with advice on individual appointments separately.

## Chief executive performance

The Commissioner is responsible for reviewing the performance of individual CEs. The Commission will be engaging with responsible ministers in April and May about the CEs within their portfolio, to inform development of CE expectations for 2026/27 and to review performance over 2025/26.

The 2026 amendments to the Public Service Act will reinforce the role of portfolio ministers in the performance expectation and review processes. The amendments to the Public Service Act will also require a CE performance framework to be developed, and once agreed by you, published on the Commission's website. We will engage with you on this before June.

## Performance Improvement Reviews

The Commission delivers Performance Improvement Reviews, which are independent, forward-looking assessments of agencies that help identify actions to address their current and future challenges. For ministers, the reviews provide a lever to shape the long-term direction of their agencies.

The current programme includes Commission-led reviews of New Zealand Police and [REDACTED] 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED], with final reports expected at the end of April 2026 and midyear respectively. The Commission also supports agencies to use our model for their own self-reviews (e.g. Cancer Control Agency, Stats NZ, and Teaching Council). We will keep you informed on reviews and follow-up assessments. There is an opportunity for you to inform the forward programme of reviews.

## Crown entities

The Commission has oversight of the Crown entity system, providing guidance to boards and monitoring departments and working actively with ministers to drive improved performance and value. The Commission's support for Crown entity boards includes tailored inductions for incoming chairs and integrity and conduct advice.

With the Minister of Finance, you issue the Enduring Letter of Expectations to Crown entity boards setting out the Government's wider performance expectations. The current letter was issued in 2024.

The Commission administers the Cabinet Fees Framework (the Framework) on behalf of Cabinet. In August 2025, Cabinet approved an increase to Framework fee ranges and asked the Commission to report back by August 2026 on their implementation. You have a role in supporting or approving proposals from ministers on exceptions to the Framework.

## Investigations

The Commissioner has statutory powers of investigation, which can be used as necessary or desirable to support his function to promote integrity, transparency, and accountability in the state services. The Commission currently has one investigation underway, in relation to a disclosure made under the Protected Disclosures (Protection of Whistleblowers) Act 2022. We will provide you with an update on this investigation before its scheduled completion in mid-2026.

## Ethical Transitions discussion document

As part of New Zealand's fifth National Action Plan under the Open Government Partnership, the Commission has committed to jointly produce a discussion document with the Ministry of Justice on "ethical transitions." It will explore the movement of individuals (elected and non-elected) between government and private sector roles (often

known as the “revolving door” phenomenon) and identify potential options to support individuals to make this transition. We will provide further advice on this proposal.

## Upcoming data releases

The Commission has a role in collecting and proactively releasing information about the Public Service. Details about upcoming releases will be provided to you ahead of publication.

### *Kiwis Count satisfaction and trust in government services*

The Kiwis Count survey has been running continuously since 2012 and is also used by other government agencies. The latest quarterly results will be published on 30 April 2026, and we will brief you separately on this.

### *Other upcoming data releases*

Dates of upcoming releases are proactively published on our website.

- Labour Cost Index – wage costs (quarterly).
- Workforce data – size/FTE and contractor and consultant expenditure (quarterly).
- Official Information Act statistics (6-monthly).
- Remuneration disclosure for Crown entity and Public Service department CEs (6-monthly).

## Government property

You are responsible for the strategic direction and performance of the government’s office portfolio. The government currently leases around 940,000 m<sup>2</sup> of office and public interface space, with a current total annual lease cost of approximately \$320 million. Of this, office space accounts for 830,000 m<sup>2</sup> and \$300 million.

MBIE’s CE is the System Lead for Property, and the Government Property Office (GPO) is the operational arm that delivers this system leadership. The GPO:

- Provides advice, guidance, and setting requirements for agencies.

- Supports agencies with leasing and project delivery needs.
- Develops portfolio plans to improve efficiency and ensure better use of office space.

MBIE officials will be available to meet with you to discuss key initiatives, including the portfolio planning programme, performance insights, and the planned development of new Government Office Rules.

## Regional Public Service Commissioners

There are eleven Regional Public Service Commissioners (RPSCs) across New Zealand covering 16 regions. RPSCs hold an all-of-government mandate to convene, resolve, and escalate any issues or barriers. A list of RPSCs is available on the Public Service website.

RPSCs are actively engaged in supporting the implementation of government strategies such as:

- Resilience to Organised Crime in Communities (ROCC).
- Multi-agency responses for family violence/sexual violence.
- Building data and evidence to inform decisions.

Secretary for Social Development Debbie Power is the System Lead for the regions. The Ministry of Social Development can provide you with further advice on the function of the RPSCs if required. The regional System Lead and the Public Service Commissioner will be available to discuss regional leadership and further opportunities to leverage the RPSC network.



## **Appendices**



## Appendix 1. Overview of the Public Service portfolio

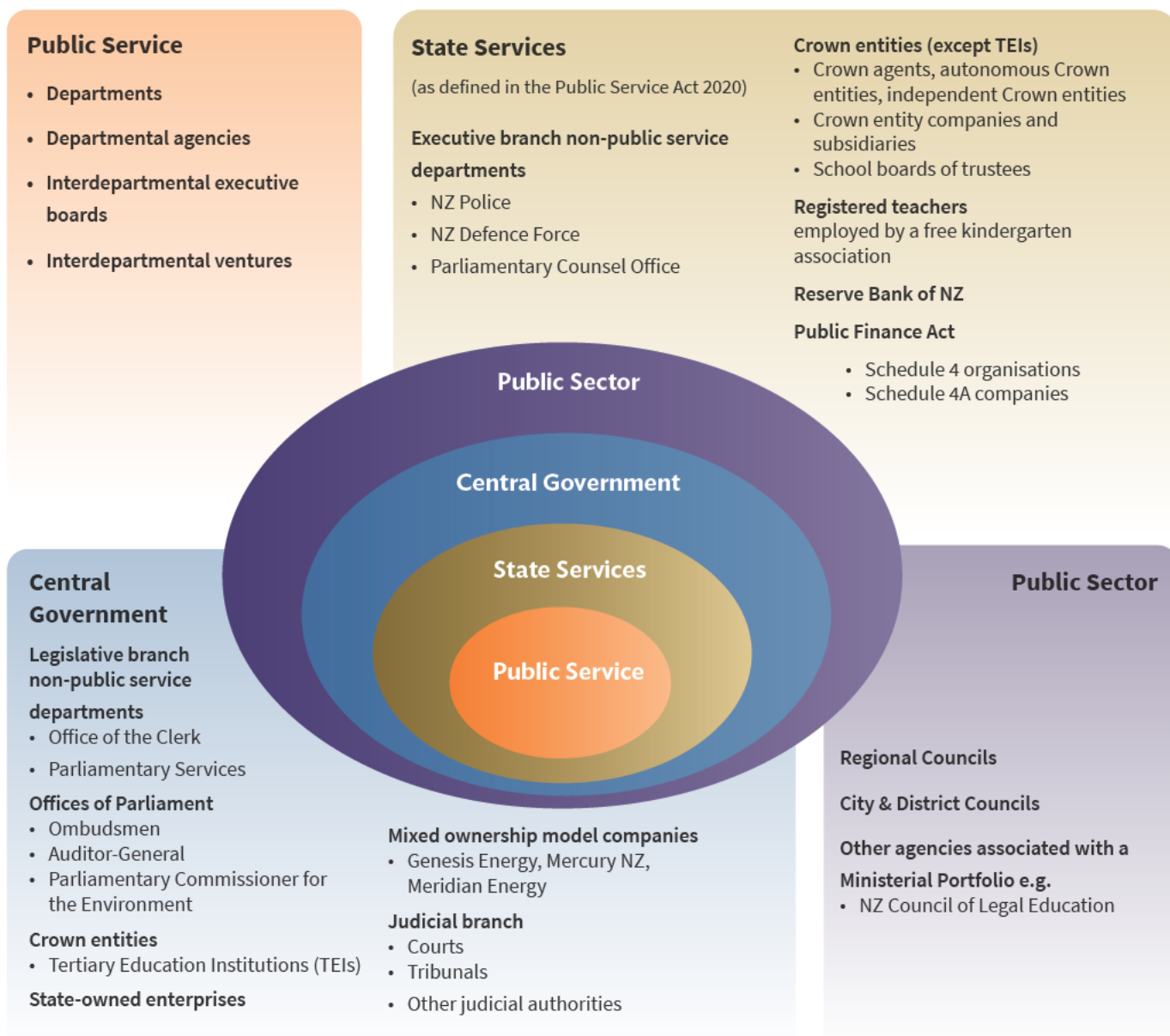
The Public Service is a major resource for you and your ministerial colleagues in driving the Government’s programme. You and other ministers are in daily contact with officials and departments whose job is to assist you – provide policy advice, ensure implementation of initiatives, and maintain the high standards of integrity and conduct for which New Zealand’s Public Service is known.

### The Public Service and the public sector

As you know, the Public Service is part of the wider public sector that is closest to and works directly under the control of ministers.

The diagram below shows the Public Service in the context of the wider public sector.

The Public Service consists of an extremely varied range of functions, agencies, and people. It includes a wide range of occupations, such as service delivery roles interacting with customers, clients, citizens, families and communities; regulatory roles that explain and enforce the rules set by Government; those that enable the digital and human resources needed to operate services; and those who support the Government in the delivery of its legislative and policy work programme. The information on the next page illustrates the range and diversity of the Public Service.



# Public Service at a glance (30 June 2025)

# 62,654

Full-time equivalent (FTE) staff\*

# 34

Departments

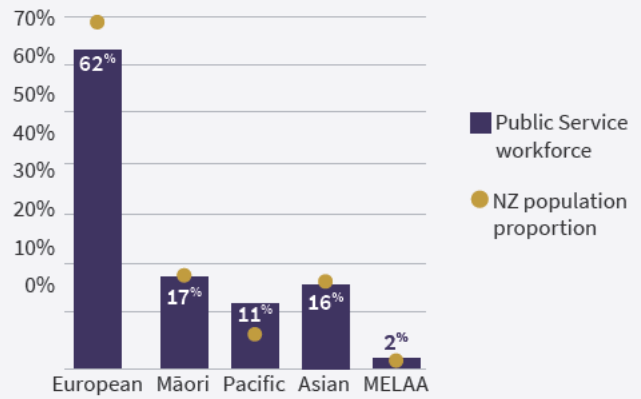
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Departmental Agencies

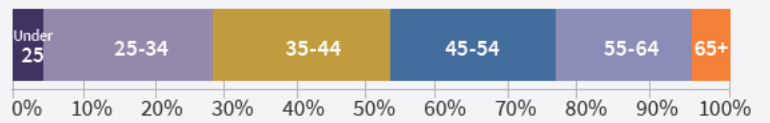
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Interdepartmental Executive Boards

Ethnicity of the Public Service workforce (2025) compared with the NZ population (Stats NZ 2023 Census)

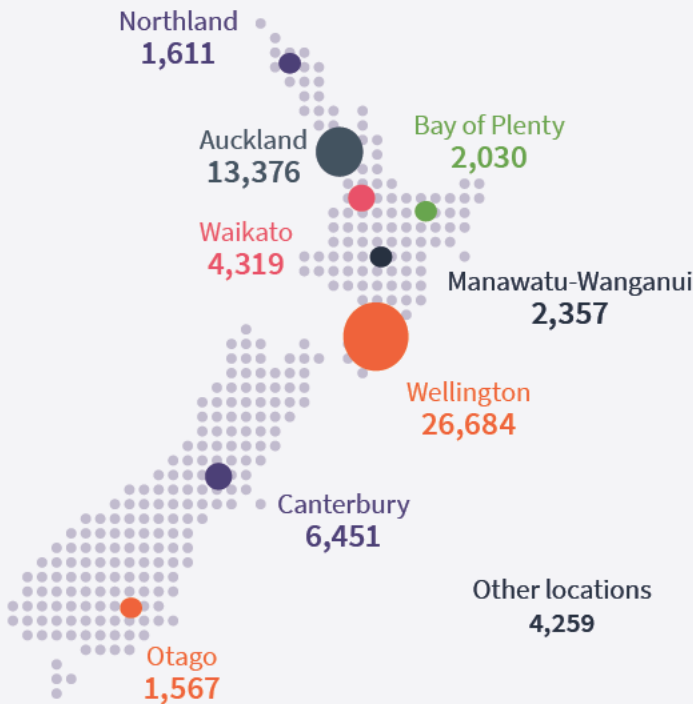


Public Service age groups\*



Average age 44.6 years

Public Service employees – main locations\*



\*Source: Workforce data as at 30 June 2025

People who work in the Public Service include\*

# 5,199

Call Centre Workers

# 1,497

Customs and Quarantine Officers

# 3,596

Case Managers

# 366

Statisticians

# 4,565

Prison Officers

# 536

Software and Applications Programmers

# 984

Park Rangers

# 502

Psychologists

# 1,803

Social Workers

# 562

Youth Workers

## The Scope of the Portfolio

The Public Service Act 2020 provides the foundational framework for the Public Service system, including the principles by which the Public Service operates: political neutrality, free and frank advice, merit-based appointments, open government, and stewardship. Together with the Public Finance Act 1989, it also provides the accountability framework for the Public Service, including the responsibilities that CEs owe to their ministers such as the efficient and economical delivery of services and outcomes.

As referenced throughout this briefing, matters that will arise as part of this portfolio include:

- appointment and employment of departmental CEs in consultation with relevant ministers;
- review of CE and Public Service agency performance on behalf of, and in consultation with, responsible ministers;
- leadership and oversight of the performance and integrity of the Public Service;
- development of the senior leadership and management capability of the Public Service;
- review of the design and operation of the system of government agencies (machinery of government);
- development of a highly capable Public Service workforce and promotion of good employer requirements in the Act;
- supporting the Crown in its relationships with Māori by developing and maintaining the capability of the Public Service to engage with Māori and understand Māori perspectives;
- employment relations in the Public Service, including collective bargaining.

Some functions of the portfolio extend beyond the Public Service and into the Crown entity sector and, to a more limited extent, into the wider public sector.

These functions are:

- consenting to the terms and conditions of employment for CEs of Crown entities and Tertiary Education Institutions;
- guidance and advice on the board appointments, legal obligations, operating environment, and ministerial expectations for Crown entities;
- determining the framework for compensation of board members, and providing advice and guidance to agencies on its implementation;
- responsibility for the Government's employment relations expectations which Crown agents (along with Public Service agencies) must implement.

## The role of the Minister

As Minister for the Public Service, you work with Cabinet colleagues and with the Public Service Commissioner (the Commissioner) to ensure that Government expectations and priorities are clear and understood by the Public Service; and that the agencies of the Public Service align, adapt, and innovate as needed to achieve these objectives. From time to time there may be instances where the expectations of the Government are at risk of not being met, and you will need to work with your ministerial colleagues to ensure issues are addressed.

There will also be a range of more specific matters that you will be involved in, or which you will need to discuss and coordinate with other ministers. Many of these involve proposals for the establishment or disestablishment of agencies, or changes in agency status or role. Your ministerial colleagues must involve you in any such proposals.

The Commissioner is responsible to you for the exercise of their leadership role and other statutory functions. The Commission is here to support you in your role to provide a higher performing Public Service, which delivers on the Government's priorities and has the trust and confidence of New Zealanders.

You are responsible for public sector legislation, including the Public Service Act 2020, Protected Disclosures (Protection of Whistleblowers) Act 2022 and parts of the Crown Entities Act 2004. Changes to these are required from time to time, and two bills in the Public Service Portfolio are currently before the House (see earlier section on Legislative changes).

You are invited to identify matters that the Commissioner must take into account in the appointment of individual CEs (e.g. priority competencies and experience) and, once the Commissioner recommends a person for appointment, you are responsible for progressing the recommendation through the relevant Cabinet Committee, to Cabinet, and then to the Governor-General for consideration. You and the Prime Minister are consulted before the conditions of employment for any CE are finalised. In relation to the wider public sector, you have responsibilities for Government expectations regarding CE remuneration and the remuneration of members of statutory boards.

You are responsible for formulating Government expectations on workforce matters and employment relations in the public sector, including formal Government Workforce Policy Statements issued under the Public Service Act.

The functions and structure of the Commission mirror the functions of the portfolio, with teams assigned to each function so as to provide the best support to you in the performance of your role. A detailed breakdown of the Commission's staffing in relation to statutory functions of the portfolio is provided in Appendix 2.

## **The role of the Public Service Commissioner**

The Commissioner and the statutory Deputy Public Service Commissioner (Deputy Commissioner) are appointed on the recommendation of the Prime Minister under the Public Service Act. The role of the Commissioner is focused on ensuring the Public Service is well-placed to deliver on the priorities of the Government and maintain the trust of New Zealanders. The general functions of the

Commissioner are set out in section 44 of the Act, and include:

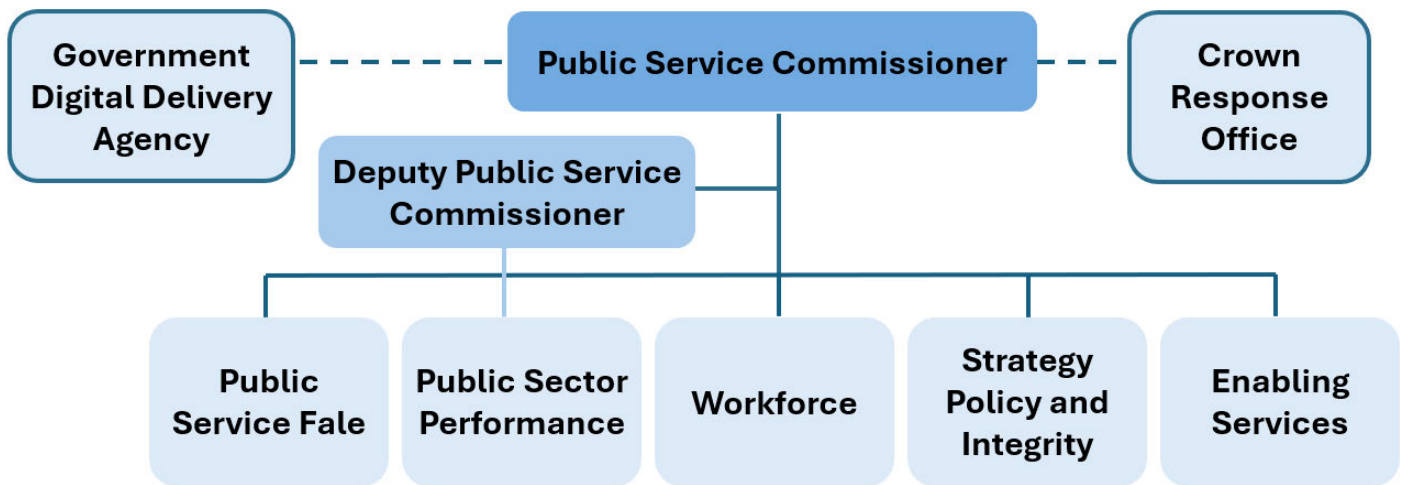
- exercising leadership so that the Public Service works as a single system;
- promoting integrity, accountability, and transparency in the public sector;
- developing a highly capable workforce;
- reviewing the design and operation of the system of public agencies; and
- acting as the employer of Public Service CEs.

The last of these is the most publicly visible part of the role. The Commissioner, or Deputy Commissioner under delegation, appoints department CEs for fixed terms, following the Governor-General's acceptance of the Commissioner's recommendation. The Commissioner sets the conditions of employment for each CE, following consultation with you and the Prime Minister.

The Commissioner is also responsible for conducting performance reviews of individual CEs. Changes in the Public Service Amendment Bill currently before the House will require the Commissioner to develop and publish a framework for those reviews in consultation with you. In line with established practice, the Commissioner will also be required to seek the input of appropriate ministers in setting the performance expectations and conducting reviews of CEs and is responsible to those portfolio ministers for doing this.

## Appendix 2. Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission: Our organisation

The Commission has 150 FTE, with a further 57 FTE in the Crown Response Office, and approximately 180 FTE in the Government Digital Delivery Agency. The Commission is organised into the following structure:



### Supporting our statutory functions

#### *Strategy, Policy and Integrity (36 FTE)*

This group supports the Commissioner to drive the strategic direction and design of the Public Service. They support measurement and reporting of system and agency performance, and lead advice on machinery of government change, policy design and legislation. The group advises on integrity matters, develops guidance and standards, and carries out integrity investigations.

#### *Workforce (36 FTE, incl. 18 FTE for Leadership Development Centre)*

This group ensures the Public Service workforce is capable and well-placed to support the delivery of government work programmes. They lead advice on workforce strategy and settings to implement government workforce policy, and are responsible for managing strategic employment relations, approving collective bargaining strategies, and delivering workforce and talent management policy advice. The Leadership Development Centre develops leadership capability across the Public Service.

#### *Public Sector Performance (27 FTE)*

This group oversees statutory responsibilities relating to CE recruitment, performance, pay and development. It provides advice on specific Crown entity matters and works with the

Treasury and DPMC to monitor, assess and drive performance across the public sector. Assistant Commissioners within this group also work directly with CEs and agencies by offering insights and advice on performance.

### Supporting the Commission

#### *Enabling Services (39 FTE)*

This group supports the Commission to deliver and perform at its best. Their work includes legal advice, people and culture, finance and assurance, workplace administration, communications and engagement, ministerial and executive services, and digital services.

#### *Office of the Commissioner (4 FTE)*

Support for the Commissioner.

### Based at the Commission

#### *Public Service Fale (8 FTE)*

The Fale is a public service centre of excellence, providing good governance and institutional strengthening advice to 16 Pacific Public Service Commissions. The activity is fully funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT).

The Fale provides peer to peer advice and practical tools to senior Pacific public service leaders to improve organisational performance. This includes capability building, organisational review support, performance management tools, integrity and ethics training and digital solutions.

The appropriation is sourced from Vote Foreign Affairs under the International Development Cooperation (IDC) appropriation and forms part of Vote Public Service. You, as the Minister for the Public Service, are the appropriation minister.

#### *Crown Response Office (57 FTE)*

In 2024 the Crown Response Office was established following a recommendation in the final report of the Abuse in Care Inquiry, Whanaketia, for a central government agency to coordinate, monitor and report on the government's response to the Royal Commission. The office sits in the Public Service Commission, with its own functional CE.

#### *Government Digital Delivery Agency (approx. 180 FTE)*


As part of the Government's first step towards the new Public Service operating model and a digitally enabled Public Service, the functions of the Government Chief Digital Officer (GCDO) shifted from DIA on 1 April 2026 and have been established as a business unit within the Commission – the Government Digital Delivery Agency.

## Appendix 3. Public Service Commission resourcing

The Commission is funded through Vote Public Service, which covers the operations of the Commission itself together with the funding for remuneration of Public Service CEs, the Crown Response Office, the Government Digital Delivery Agency, and the Public Service Fale.

### Appropriations within Vote Public Service

9(2)(f)(iv) confidentiality of advice



## Minister for the Public Service

### *Leadership of the Public Management System*

\$43 million 9(2)(f)(iv) confidentiality of advice to support decision-making by ministers on Government policy matters and lead the Public Service to achieve better outcomes and improve public services for New Zealanders.

### *Public Service Fale*

\$3.6 million 9(2)(f)(iv) confidentiality of advice to support the strengthening of the public sector in Pacific Island countries and territories through the Public Service Fale.

### *Remuneration and Related Employment Costs of Chief Executives*

\$22 million 9(2)(f)(iv) confidentiality of advice for the remuneration and related employment costs of CEs employed by the Commission.

### *Open Government Partnership*

\$200,000 (9(2)(f)(iv) confidentiality of advice) for payments associated with New Zealand's membership of the Open Government Partnership. (Note this amount is not reflected in the graph above due to its smaller scale).

## **Minister for Digitising Government**

### *Government Digital Delivery Agency*

\$11 million (9(2)(f)(iv) confidentiality of advice) to lead and deliver cross-government digital transformation to achieve a citizen-focused, digital-first Public Service.

## **Lead Coordination Minister for the Government's Response to the Royal Commission's Report into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions**

### *Responding to the Abuse in Care Inquiry*

\$21 million (9(2)(f)(iv) confidentiality of advice) to support the Crown's response for survivors following the Abuse in Care Inquiry, including designing a new Redress System as agreed by Cabinet.

### *Lake Alice Unit Torture Redress Payments*

\$2 million (9(2)(f)(iv) confidentiality of advice) to support survivors to access the services they need to engage with the redress process.

## Appendix 4. Commission leadership – Statutory officers

The Commissioner is supported by a statutory deputy, who is appointed by the same process as the Commissioner and exercises the same functions and powers. This is to ensure that the leadership of the Public Service and the support provided to you in your portfolio is underpinned by a breadth of capability and perspectives.



### **Sir Brian Roche KNZM**

*Public Service Commissioner, Head of Service*

Sir Brian is the Public Service Commissioner and Head of Service. He was appointed to the role in November 2024.

He most recently has been Chair of the Cyclone Recovery Taskforce from 2023 to 2024 and Chair of New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi from 2019 to 2022. Sir Brian was the Chief Executive of New Zealand Post from 2010 to 2017, and prior to this was a Partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) from 1987 to 2009.



### **Heather Baggott**

*Deputy Public Service Commissioner and Deputy Chief Executive, Public Sector Performance*

Heather is the Deputy Public Service Commissioner who works closely with the Commissioner to provide leadership and oversight of the Public Service. Heather has also been an Assistant Commissioner at the Commission and has held several senior leadership roles in the justice and culture sectors and in Treaty settlement negotiations.

As the Deputy Chief Executive, Public Sector Performance Heather has a particular focus on supporting the Commissioner's role as employer of Public Service chief executives and managing agency performance across the Public Service and Crown entities.

## Appendix 5. Commission leadership – Key contacts

Alongside the Commissioner and their statutory deputy, you will receive advice and support from a range of key contacts across the Commission. The below senior leaders will be your key contacts for the day-to-day management of the portfolio.



### Alex Chadwick

*Deputy Chief Executive, Workforce*

Alex is responsible for supporting the development of the Public Service workforce and for meeting government expectations in employment and workforce matters. With a background as an employment lawyer, Alex has worked in the UK Civil Service and at legal firms and large corporates in the UK and New Zealand. Before joining the Commission, Alex led the Employment Relations function at Fonterra. She has governance experience, serving on boards including Diversity Works, and has led and implemented ER and workforce strategies in the public and private sectors.



### Hugo Vitalis

*Deputy Chief Executive, Strategy, Policy & Integrity*

Hugo has overall responsibility for the Commission's policy, analysis, integrity and research functions. Hugo has held a number of roles across the Commission including Deputy Commissioner, Integrity, Ethics & Standards and Manager, Innovation and Strategy. Prior to joining the Commission, Hugo held management roles in strategy and policy groups within the Ministry for Social Development. He has also worked at the Ministry of Justice, Legal Services Agency, Wellington Regional Council, Ministry of Culture and Heritage and the Department of Internal Affairs.



### Tania Ott

*Deputy Commissioner, Public Service Fale*

Tania is responsible for the Public Service Fale, established in January 2020 as a Pacific-led Public Service centre of excellence. Tania joined the Commission as an Assistant Commissioner, and prior to that, was Group Manager Senior Courts at the Ministry of Justice. Tania has also held Public Service roles at the Office of Treaty Settlements, Department of Internal Affairs and Department of Labour (as it was then called) and served as private secretary to several government ministers and as an advisor in the Office of the Prime Minister.



### Thor Gudjonsson

*Deputy Chief Executive, Enabling Services*

Thor leads the Commission's Enabling Services group encompassing Legal, Finance, HR, IT, Communications, Property and Ministerial and Executive Services to ensure the Commission operates effectively and efficiently. Before taking up this role he was the Deputy Commissioner System and Agency Performance within the Commission. Prior to joining the Commission, Thor held a number of Chief Financial Officer roles including the Intelligence Community, Ministry of Justice and Ministry for Primary Industries.

## Appendix 6. Legislation administered by the Commission

### The Public Service Act 2020:

- is one of the key Acts that sets the foundations for the public sector system;
- sets out the Public Service's purpose, principles and values;
- recognises the Public Service's role in supporting the Māori Crown relationship;
- establishes the role, functions and powers of the Public Service Commissioner;
- provides for the establishment and disestablishment of Public Service agencies;
- provides for appointment, responsibilities, duties and powers of chief executives;
- provides for the establishment of the Public Service Leadership Team and the appointment of functional chief executives;
- provides for various workforce and personnel matters, including how the Employment Relations Act 2000 applies in relation to the Public Service.

### The Crown Entities Act 2004 (parts 1, 2, 3 and 5):

- provides a consistent framework for the establishment, governance, and operation of Crown entities;
- clarifies accountability relationships between Crown entities, their board members and responsible ministers on behalf of the Crown and Parliament.

### The Protected Disclosures (Protection of Whistleblowers) Act 2022:

- protects employees who disclose information about serious wrongdoing in or by an organisation;
- facilitates the disclosure and investigation of matters of serious wrongdoing.

### The Plain Language Act 2022:

- requires that Public Service agencies and Crown entities take reasonable steps to ensure public-facing documents they produce use plain language. Note that a repeal bill for this Act is currently before the House.

### The Fees and Travelling Allowances Act 1951:

- provided for mechanisms for the payment of remuneration, allowances and expenses of members of statutory boards, as well as travelling allowances or expenses of local authority members;
- was superseded in practice by the Cabinet Fees Framework, administered by the Commission [CO (22) 2], and by the Remuneration Authority in relation to local authority members.

### The Ministry of Works and Development Abolition Act 1988:

- provided for consequential matters following the disestablishment of the Ministry of Works and Development (e.g. savings provisions relating to contracts and consents).



**Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa**  
New Zealand Government

# Briefing to the Incoming Minister for Digitising Government

April 2026



**Te Kawa Mataaho**  
Public Service Commission



**Government Digital  
Delivery Agency**  
Te Pūnaha Matihiko



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# Introduction

Welcome to the Public Service and Digitising Government portfolio. The integration of these two previously separate portfolios under your leadership provides key synergies at a pivotal time. You have responsibility for the overall strategy and direction for New Zealand's digital government transformation, and the opportunity to lead the use of digital to drive lasting changes to how government operates.

When implemented well, digital technologies offer huge opportunities for underpinning reforms aimed at transforming the public service and wider sector to become digitally enabled, efficiently structured and more cost-effective and higher performing. Digital can enable government to operate more efficiently as a system and to deliver joined-up, world-class digital government services.

In 2025, Cabinet agreed to a new approach to government digital investment and procurement, led by the Government Chief Digital Officer (GCDO), to drive down the cost of digital in government and deliver better services to customers. This includes the establishment of the Government Digital Delivery Agency (GDDA) in the Public Service Commission, and shift of GCDO functions to this new digital agency.

In December 2025, Cabinet endorsed a Digital Government Target State (Target State) which sets the direction for government's digital service delivery and footprint. The Target State will shift government's current duplicative, complex, and inefficient digital footprint towards a streamlined, efficient approach that leverages economies of scale and enables joined-up digital service delivery. Over time, agencies will share digital systems and platforms when it makes sense and services will be delivered around the needs of people, rather than agency boundaries.

You have an important role in directing and championing this significant change programme towards a more disciplined, efficient digital government that better serves the needs of New Zealanders. Strong Ministerial leadership with a long-term, big picture lens is needed. Your active oversight, support, and, where appropriate, intervention will be required to ensure that agencies align their approaches to the Target State and direction for public sector reform set under this portfolio.

This briefing provides you with information about the strategic context and direction of travel for Digitising Government, the current GDDA work programme, immediate upcoming briefings and decisions, and your roles and responsibilities as Minister.

# Section One: Strategic context

**Digitising Government underpins the transformation of the public sector operating model, drives down the cost of digital in government, and ensures government digital services meet the needs of people and organisations.**

Digital technologies are transforming how governments around the world deliver services to citizens. Modern cloud-based systems and AI can enable faster, more convenient services that meet New Zealanders' needs and expectations. Technological advances have also dramatically reduced the cost and time required to prototype and develop digital solutions.

Government agencies have embraced the use of digital but have done so in inefficient agency siloes. Individual agencies have invested in their own bespoke systems to carry out day-to-day work and deliver services to customers, duplicating cost and capability and fragmenting service delivery. This has resulted in:

- a large, expensive, duplicative and hard to maintain government digital footprint, and
- digital services that are largely based around agency boundaries, not the needs of New Zealanders.

Adopting modern, centralised approaches to government ICT investment, procurement and delivery can drive down cost and improve service delivery. Solutions can be invested in once and re-used across government, with digital investment and procurement streamlined and aggregated to deliver economies of scale. These approaches are key to future-proofing government and maintaining relevance and public trust amongst rapid technological change and a dynamic global environment.

## Digital Government Target State

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The Target State sets the architectural direction for government, providing a blueprint which agencies are required to align with. The initial three-year Target State agreed by Cabinet in December 2025 sets the direction for:

- simplified digital services that wrap around the customer, and
- a smaller, simplified government digital footprint that reduces duplication and is less expensive to maintain.

An overview of the initial Target State is attached as **Appendix One**.

The Target State and broader direction for digital government transformation can deliver significant cost savings through more efficiently structuring government and reducing government's digital footprint. It can also drive productivity boosts across the economy. By mid-2028, the GDDA forecasts potential savings between \$200 and \$330 million. By the end

of year seven, these forecast cumulative savings rise to between \$2.3 and \$3.7 billion, rising to between \$3.7 and \$5.9 billion by the end of year ten.

The establishment of agency digital clusters is at the core of the Target State. These will see logical groupings of agencies share different categories of ICT systems and digital services, rather than having their own. Digital clustering supports (but does not require) Machinery of Government change such as the establishment of the Ministry of Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport (MCERT). The GDDA is supporting the technology consolidation underpinning the establishment of MCERT.

Secure and effective digital identity, data flows and an AI-first approach underpin the Target State. Digital Public Infrastructure like a Government App, digital wallet, secure messaging, payment platform and data exchange will be invested in once and used by all agencies, providing the backbone for consistent, high-quality service delivery.

The private sector will play a key role in delivering this new digital direction, partnering to provide capability, innovation, and scalable solutions, and enabling government to harness the efficiency and productivity gains of technologies such as AI.

While initial progress is being made within agency baselines, targeted investment – both centrally and at an agency level – will be needed over time to realise the full benefits of the centralised approach.

**About the Government Chief Digital Officer (GCDO) role**

The Government Chief Digital Officer (GCDO) is a system leadership role mandated under the Public Service Act 2020. It builds on previous functional digital leadership arrangements. The first system-wide digital system leadership Cabinet mandates were put in place in the early 2000s and have evolved over time.

The GCDO role and is now held by the Functional Chief Executive of the Government Digital Delivery Agency. The Public Service Commissioner, Sir Brian Roche, currently holds the role while Functional Chief Executive arrangements are worked through.

Other system leadership roles that work closely alongside the GCDO include the Government Chief Information Security Officer (GCISO, the Director-General of the Government Communications Security Bureau), the Government Chief Data Steward (GCDS, the Chief Executive of Stats NZ) and the Government Procurement Lead (the Chief Executive of the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment). The GCDO and GDDA also work closely with other Central Agencies, especially the Treasury.

## Government needs to work together differently

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The benefits sought can only be realised through strong central leadership at the Ministerial and agency level. A hub-and-spoke agency-level model, led by the GDDA and GCDO, can drive direction setting and alignment from the centre, with coherent, coordinated delivery both from the centre where it makes sense (such as the Govt.nz App) and through agencies.

This represents a fundamental shift to how government has traditionally been organised and operates and delivers services. Agencies will need to move away from having control over all their ICT decisions and systems, to working with and for other agencies, and aligning with centrally directed sequencing of government digital investment.

Chief executives must work collectively rather than making decisions in isolation, and work with Central Agencies to drive shifts in the way public sector organisations, people, policies and processes operate. Chief executives have embraced the need to take a system-wide approach and acknowledged that this will require shared ownership, shared delivery, and system-level accountability.

Multi-agency technology solutions may cost more or take longer in the short term but will deliver clear benefits and savings for government as a whole. The strong support of Ministers, chief executives and their agencies, and the prioritisation of system needs and outcomes over individual agency priorities will be critical for success. You have a key role in leading your Ministerial colleagues towards operating in this way.

# Section Two: Work Programme

The 2026 Digitising Government work programme includes deliverables endorsed by Cabinet in December 2025 and additional actions to support the delivery of the Target State.

The work programme is delivering on Cabinet’s expectation that the GDDA and GCDO set a clear direction for digital and work to shift agencies towards this direction. It focuses on delivering impact from the centre, to drive alignment and changes across agency operations and practice. While the work programme is led by the GDDA, all public sector agencies need to work to actively drive progress towards the Target State, improve government digital services and drive down the cost of digital in government.

The following sections provide an overview of the work programme, along with the current status and next steps. We look forward to further briefing you on the wider work programme and demonstrating technologies under development, at your convenience.

## Digitising Government Targets

The three-year measurable targets for the new approach to government digital investment and procurement, as agreed by Cabinet to June 2028 are:

- four million digital identity credentials issued
- two million downloads of the Government App
- ten agency digital clusters underway, and
- a 15 percent reduction in government’s digital investment intentions pipeline.<sup>1</sup>

## Directing government digital investment and procurement

### Digital investment

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A forward investment plan is under development for key investment objectives for agreement by Central Agencies. The plan will guide prioritisation and decision making about digital government investments.

In the second half of 2026, the GDDA will also:

- assess agency digital strategies and investment intentions against the Target State. This will inform the GCDO’s advice to Treasury ahead of Budget 2027 about the alignment, sequencing and continuation of initiatives.

<sup>1</sup> Baselined against the 2024 investment intentions of \$13 billion, to be achieved through alignment of agency intentions towards the Digital Government Target State and agency digital clustering.

- work with the Treasury to issue new digital investment advice to agencies.

## Digital procurement

A forward procurement plan is also under development to identify and sequence the digital procurement necessary to support the Target State. <sup>9(2)(i) prejudice to commercial activities, 9(2)(j) prejudice to negotiations</sup>

An all-of-government procurement panel for human resources and payroll systems will soon be launched to establish agreed suppliers for agencies. This is part of the GDDA's initiative to standardise and streamline back-office systems, which is expected to save \$160 million over the next 10 years through de-duplicating legal, procurement, configuration, and other costs. This work will build on the savings already delivered by the GDDA's digital procurement function (the All of Government Digital Portfolio).

The All of Government Digital Portfolio has delivered approximately \$907 million in savings, or 13.5 percent since 2017.

In the 2024/25 Financial Year, 334 public sector organisations spent approximately \$1.1 billion through the Portfolio, resulting in savings of \$104 million, or 9.5 percent. 57% of the total spend through the Portfolio was with New Zealand businesses.

## Providing data leadership for government service delivery

In August 2025, Cabinet gave the GCDO responsibility for data leadership for digital service delivery. The data leadership programme has been established to support this role and work towards establishing the secure data exchange envisioned in the Target State.

We are working with the Government Chief Data Steward (Stats NZ) and the Social Investment Agency to clearly articulate and align our respective government data leadership roles and establish shared government data governance.

We are also developing a draft data exchange architecture for consultation by the end of June 2026. This will provide a blueprint design for all-of-government data sharing and will be supported by a data access policy scheduled for development later in 2026.

## Additional foundations for the Digital Government Target State

A range of other deliverables are also underway to support the Target State and ensure the foundations and enablers are in place.


### Establishing agency digital clusters

We provided initial advice to your predecessor on 1 April 2026 on the establishment of agency digital clusters. We understand that this advice will be transferred to you. It seeks your endorsement of our proposed approach for the establishment of an initial set of agency digital clusters, and agreement to share this advice with the Minister of Finance.


## Extending the GCDO mandate to Crown entities

We are seeking to bring selected Crown entities under the scope of the GDDA/GCDO investment and procurement mandate through a direction from the Minister of Finance and the Minister of the Public Service under section 107 of the Crown Entities Act 2004.

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9(2)(f)(iv) confidentiality of advice



## Establishing comprehensive system governance for the Target State

Effective, sustainable system leadership is required to achieve the Target State and implement the new centralised approach to government digital investment and procurement. We are leading work to establish officials-level governance processes and structures for the Target State, data leadership and digital investment and procurement.

## Delivering the All of Government Digital Portfolio

The GDDA manages a commercial All of Government Portfolio of digital products and services (the AoG Digital Portfolio) which is available to all public sector agencies and organisations. The AoG Digital Portfolio provides access to a range of reliable, secure, and fit-for-purpose digital products and services and is currently used by over 330 public sector agencies and organisations.

The AoG Digital Portfolio delivers cost savings and efficiencies through streamlining agency procurement and leveraging government's purchasing power to negotiate overarching agreements with suppliers. The GDDA provides security assurance across the AoG Digital Portfolio, improving government and the system's security posture, and delivering value for money by reducing security assurance costs across the public sector and digital suppliers.

## Delivering the Government App Programme

A key priority for your predecessor was the development of a government app and associated digital public infrastructure to enable customers to securely access trusted government information, digital credentials and services from their mobile phones.

The Govt.nz App was launched in December 2025. The app has been designed to grow over time based on the needs of New Zealanders and government priorities. As of 2 April 2026, there have been 35,000 downloads of the Govt.nz App.

The app currently guides users to a range of services, information, tools and helplines, a personal dashboard keeping track of relevant services, and an emergency alert feature. Additional services and capabilities will be integrated directly into the app throughout 2026.

The digital wallet will allow users to hold digital credentials as they become available from mid-2026 onwards. A credential issuance platform went live at the end of March 2026 to enable agencies to start issuing digital credentials.

**Accelerating trusted and secure digital identity**

Digital identity services allow people to use credentials (such as a digital driver licence) to prove who they are and confirm their eligibility to access services or buy products. We are working to establish a digital identity ecosystem of multiple providers operating seamlessly across the public and private sectors.

You are the Minister responsible for the Digital Identity Services Trust Framework Act 2023. The Act sets the legal framework for the provision of secure and trusted digital identity services for individuals and organisations.

The regulator for the Trust Framework is the Trust Framework Authority, a separate statutory authority within the GDDA. The Authority accredited its first services early this year and expects to consider further accreditations over the coming months.

18(d) soon publicly available



**Accelerating public service Artificial Intelligence (AI) uptake**

AI and automation can deliver huge benefits for the public service by performing high-volume low-value tasks and freeing up resources for higher value activities. If implemented well, AI can boost productivity, increase efficiency, and support the delivery of customer-centric services. The GCDO leads the public service’s safe and responsible use of AI.

In late 2025, your predecessor agreed a *Public Service AI Work Programme to 2027*. Its four overarching focus areas address barriers to AI uptake: common tools, safe and responsible AI, customer and partnerships, and AI workforce. We will provide you with a copy of the Work Programme and are progressing the deliverables it details.

Governance for the AI Work Programme is provided by the Innovation, Technology and Science (ITS) pillar of the Going for Growth Ministerial Group, convened by the Minister of Finance. The ITS pillar also includes you, the Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology, Minister of Education and Minister of Revenue.

# Section Three: Upcoming Cabinet papers, briefings and decisions

This section outlines upcoming Cabinet papers, briefings and decisions you will be required to make in the next three months. It also provides a list of introductory briefings we can provide for you on key areas within the GDDA work programme.

18(d) soon publicly available



## Upcoming Cabinet papers

Paper	Purpose	Key Dates
18(d) soon publicly available		
9(2)(f)(iv) confidentiality of advice		
9(2)(f)(iv) confidentiality of advice		

## Briefings and decisions required

### Key Briefings

Title	Action for Minister	Date
<b>Briefing: Transferring the Government Chief Digital Officer function to PSC – residual financial matters</b>	For approval/feedback by 15 April 2026	Provided to and signed by your predecessor; is now with the Minister of Finance
<b>Briefing: Initial advice on digital clusters</b>	For endorsement and agreement at your convenience	Provided to your predecessor on 1 April 2026; will be transferred to you
18(d) soon publicly available		
<b>Briefing: Budget 2026 Final Documentation for Vote Internal Affairs – Digitising Government Appropriations</b>	For noting	8 May 2026
<b>Briefing: Digital Identity Services Trust Framework Rules Amendment 2026-1</b>	For approval by 25 May 2026	19 May 2026

### Event and meeting invitations

Your predecessor accepted or tentatively accepted invitations to some upcoming meetings and events. Subject to your direction, we can work with your office to transfer these invitations to you and support your attendance.

Event/meeting	Event/meeting information	Date
<b>Going for Growth – Innovation, Technology and Science Ministers Meeting</b>	As Minister for Digitising Government, you are a member of Going for Growth – Innovation, Technology and Science Ministers Pillar.	11 May 2026; 22 June 2026, ongoing
<b>Government Innovation Week Aotearoa</b>	Opportunity to deliver a keynote speech on Digitising Government at Government Innovation Week Aotearoa.	12 May 2026

Event/meeting	Event/meeting information	Date
<b>AI Demonstration at Inland Revenue with Minister Watts</b>	Opportunity to visit Inland Revenue (IR) with Minister Watts to see demonstrations of IR's use of AI.	14 May 2026
<b>GovTech 2026</b>	Opportunity to deliver a keynote speech on Digitising Government at the GovTech event.	21 May 2026

### ***Meetings with technology suppliers***

We anticipate that you will receive regular requests to meet with technology suppliers. The GDDA holds strategic relationships with many technology suppliers through its digital procurement function, the AoG Digital Services Portfolio. We can support you with advice on any requests or meetings.

### **Introductory briefings**

The two Cabinet papers provided alongside this briefing set out the Cabinet-agreed direction Cabinet for the GCDO and GDDA and work programme deliverables to June 2028:

- *Driving down the cost of digital in government* [CAB-25-MIN-0286]
- *Driving down the cost of digital in government – Implementation* [CAB-25-MIN-0476]

With your approval, we will provide you with the following briefings in the coming weeks. They provide more detail about the work underway within the GDDA. We can provide you with further advice on any specific areas of interest or urgency.

Title	Purpose
<b>Public Service AI Work Programme to 2027</b>	Signed by your predecessor in December 2025.  Sets out the Public Service AI work programme and key deliverables through to 2027. Incorporates feedback from Going for Growth Innovation, Science and Technology pillar Ministers.
<b>Accelerating digital identity and the Govt.nz App</b>	Provides you with information on the key role digital identity plays in digitising government, how the Digital Identity Services Trust Framework Act 2023 supports a secure and trusted digital identity ecosystem, and the role of the Govt.nz App in setting a new direction for digital identity and digital service delivery.
9(2)(f)(iv) confidentiality of advice	

Title	Purpose
	9(2)(f)(iv) confidentiality of advice
	9(2)(f)(iv) confidentiality of advice
<b>Data leadership briefing</b>	Signed by your predecessor in December 2025.  Provides an overview of the work being undertaken by the GCDA, Stats NZ and SIA to identify demarcations and areas of shared responsibility for government data leadership, and key work programme priorities for the GCDO's data leadership.
<b>All of Government Digital Portfolio of ICT Products and Digital Services</b>	Provides you with information about the products and services provided to agencies through the GDDA's All of Government Digital Portfolio, and how it delivers efficiencies and savings to government.

## Section Four: Your role as Minister

You lead the overall strategy and direction for Government's digital transformation and have responsibility for the Government Chief Digital Officer system leadership function.

The Government has set strong expectations of data and digital as crucial enablers of wider reforms underway. These expectations, paired with the new centralised approach to government digital investment and procurement, increase the influence and importance of the portfolio. You have levers to influence and direct the work of agencies to align with the Target State and portfolio priorities.

You can deliver considerable social and economic benefits to New Zealand by leading the use of digital to support public service reform, ensuring that the right digital investments are made and that digital government services meet people's needs and expectations. We look forward to discussing your Digitising Government priorities with you.

### **Strategic relationships with Ministerial colleagues**

Digital transformation affects all parts of government. Your role intersects with and supports delivery across all other Ministerial portfolios and priorities.

You will have frequent opportunities to ensure your Ministerial colleagues understand the importance of digital as a critical enabler of the Government's policy agenda and priorities. This may require your effort to highlight the importance of their support to help drive system benefits through progress towards the Target State.

The Ministerial colleagues you are likely to work closely with include the Minister of Finance, and Ministers with responsibility for large portfolios planning significant digital investment.

### **Levers to influence digital investment decisions**

Along with the Minister of Finance, you have the power to veto government ICT investment proposals when they are not consistent with the Target State and digital government priorities. The GCDO will provide you with advice in cases where this measure may be warranted. We expect this will be a last resort to ensure agencies are aligning appropriately to the Target State. There will also be opportunities for you to directly influence your Ministerial colleagues about potential investment in digital systems within their portfolios.

### **Opportunities to engage internationally**

You will have opportunities to engage internationally with your Ministerial peers from the world's leading digital nations to share experiences, leverage international expertise and maintain New Zealand's presence on the digital world stage.

New Zealand is a founding member of the Digital Nations Network (DN), a closed multilateral forum of nine leading digital governments<sup>2</sup> with a goal of harnessing digital technology to improve citizens' lives. You lead our Ministerial participation in the DN. New Zealand will hold the DN Presidency in 2027 and host the DN Summit in late 2027. As incoming President, New Zealand is hosting the senior officials working group in July 2026 in London.

You are also a member of the Australian Data and Digital Minister's Meeting. This forum meets regularly and provides a unique insight into Australia's technological solutions at the state and federal level. Your participation enables information sharing and grows the relationship with Australia at Ministerial and officials' level.

The GDDA is also part of the officials-level Digital Government Exchange, established in 2016 by Singapore, and engages with other international partners regularly, including the OECD.

### **Māori Crown Relationships**

Strong relationships and engagement with iwi and Māori are an important part of effective digital system leadership and service delivery.

The Government Chief Digital Officer (GCDO) maintains a strategic relationship with iwi-Māori through a Mana Ōrite Relationship Agreement with the Data Iwi Leaders Group, a subcommittee mandated by the National Iwi Chairs Forum (NICF) to engage with the Crown on digital and data matters.

Mana Ōrite relationships operate at the agency level and reflect a mana-to-mana relationship approach, recognising the standing and authority of both parties. These relationships complement Treaty of Waitangi settlements and broader Crown Treaty commitments but do not replace the Crown's Treaty relationships with Māori.

The Data Iwi Leaders Group strongly supports opportunities in digital government and has met regularly with your predecessor.

### **Support for your role as Minister**

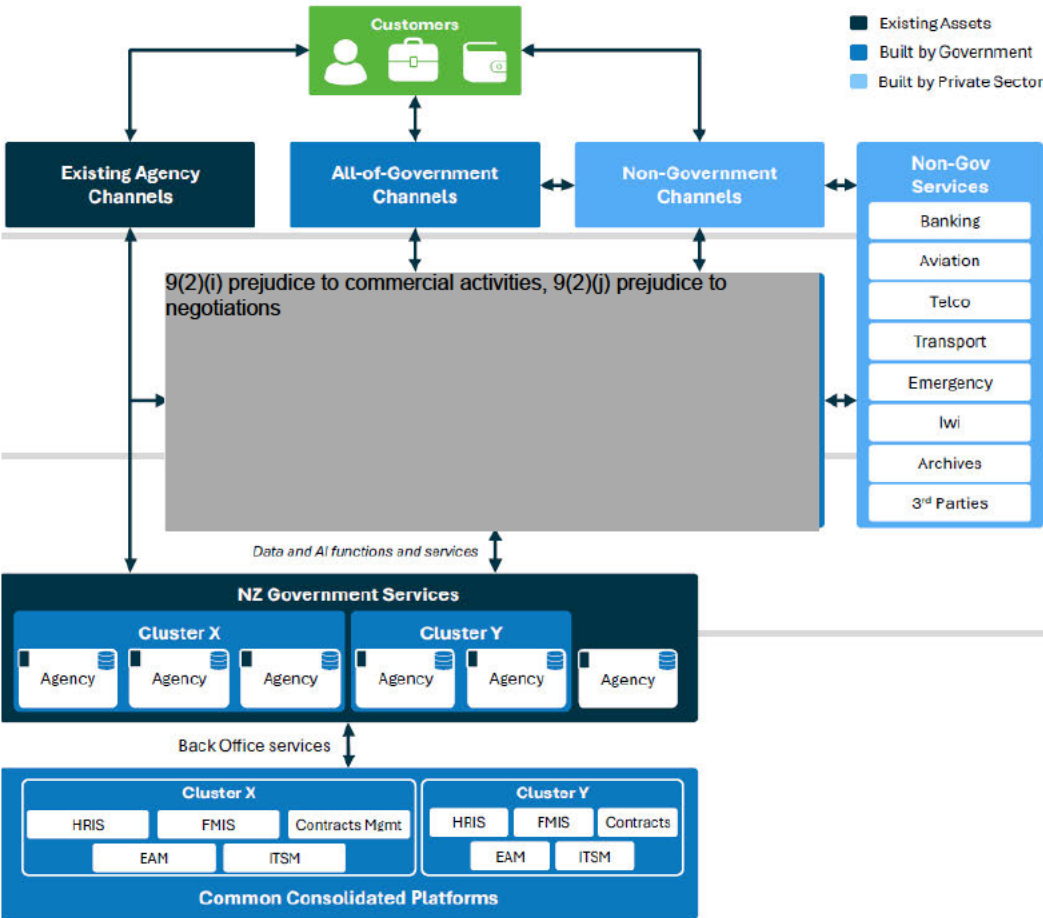
The Government Digital Delivery Agency provides support to you in this role. This includes Private Secretary resource, Ministerial services, and support for stakeholder engagement/events.

During the initial period of transition from the Department of Internal Affairs to the Public Service Commission, the Department of Internal Affairs will continue to provide some Policy support (working through the GDDA).

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<sup>2</sup> Canada, Estonia, South Korea, Israel, Portugal, Uruguay, United Kingdom and Mexico.

# Appendix One: Digital Government Target State



**Customer Layer**  
 Interaction points for customers and government. Digital credentials live in a customer digital wallet. Customers choose which credentials to share with Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) and agencies. Services are orchestrated around service clusters using agency rules and data, aligned to common standards, reducing the need to deal with individual agencies.

**Digital Public Infrastructure Layer**  
 Standardised, agency-agnostic layer that includes common tooling (e.g. AI, digital identity), and the architecture to orchestrate and deliver services. DPI composes privacy-preserving, credential-enabled services using centrally defined standards and patterns. Over time, services are increasingly delivered through DPI as existing agency channels are phased out.

**Integration Layer**  
 Passes outcomes of DPI-enabled channel transactions to agencies. Agencies expose service and data to DPI for orchestration and are notified on service request, updating their operational systems. The central integration of AI, messaging, and payments services with agencies ensures consistent delivery across customer channels.

**Agency, Platform, and Infrastructure Layer**  
 Agency platforms (including clusters and common consolidated platforms) are built pragmatically for relevant customer needs, and both consume from and contribute to DPI. Some platforms remain federated or unique, while agencies continue to manage systems of record. Customers keep oversight of any stored data and can request agencies to delete stored data.

## Appendix Two: Appropriations

As Minister for the Public Service and Digitising Government, you are responsible for all expenditure and services received under appropriations relevant to digitising government and the Government Digital Delivery Agency. The appropriation related to the Government Digital Delivery Agency is \$50.673 million departmental operating. The table below outlines the departmental operating appropriation you are responsible for based on the 2026 March Baseline Update:

\$million	Departmental appropriation
50.673	Leading digital transformation across the Public Sector and delivering and regulating digital services for New Zealanders
<b>50.673</b>	<b>Total Departmental Operating</b>

### Memorandum accounts







Two services in this appropriation operate as memorandum accounts. These are the NZ Gazette and System Capabilities, Services and Platforms memorandum accounts. Both memorandum accounts are trending towards zero balances. Based on current budgets, the combined deficit is \$9.960 million, as summarised in the below table.

Memorandum Account Closing Balance Surplus/(deficit) (\$m)	As 31 March 2026 Budget	As 30 June 2026 Budget
System Capabilities, Services and Platform	(10.213)	(9.062)
New Zealand Gazette	0.253	0.018
<b>Total deficit</b>	<b>(9.960)</b>	<b>(9.044)</b>

On 1 July 2023, the Lead Agency Fee for the ICT Common Capabilities, Framework Agreements and Marketplace services was increased. This increase and growth in use of the All of Government Portfolio of ICT products and services is forecast to increase cost recovery and further reduce the deficit by the end of 2028/29.

9(2)(f)(iv) confidentiality of advice

# Appendix Three: Key Contacts

	<p><b>Sir Brian Roche KNZM</b> <i>Public Service Commissioner, Head of Service Functional Chief Executive, Government Digital Delivery Agency and Government Chief Digital Officer</i> <i>(while Functional Chief Executive arrangements are worked through)</i></p>
	<p><b>Myles Ward</b> <i>Deputy Secretary Government Digital Delivery Agency</i> Tel. 9(2)(a) privacy</p>
	<p><b>Phil Weir</b> <i>Director Government Digital Strategy</i> Tel. 9(2)(a) privacy</p>
	<p><b>Monica Greenan</b> <i>General Manager Government Digital Agency Partnerships</i> Tel. 9(2)(a) privacy</p>
	<p><b>Richard Ashworth</b> <i>General Manager Government Digital Services Delivery</i> Tel. 9(2)(a) privacy</p>
	<p><b>James Little</b> <i>Director Trust Framework</i> Tel. 9(2)(a) privacy</p>



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