

TE TAUNAKI
Public Service Census
2021



**Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa**
New Zealand Government

Women in the Public Service Deep Dive

August 2023



Te Kawa Mataaho
Public Service Commission

Contents

Diversity and inclusion in the Public Service.....	4
About the data	4
Workforce Data.....	5
Te Taunaki Public Service Census.....	5
Data and comparisons	6
About the deep dive reports.....	7
From the Government Women’s Network (GWN).....	8
Section One: Understanding the community – Women in the Public Service	10
Region	10
Agency.....	13
Occupations	13
Pay.....	14
Leadership.....	15
Age	15
Ethnicity	16
Section Two: Understanding the community – Māori women in the Public Service	17
Region	17
Agency.....	19
Occupations	20
Pay.....	21
Leadership.....	21
Age	21
Section Three: Understanding the community –Pacific women in the Public Service.....	23
Region	23
Agency.....	25
Occupations	26
Pay.....	27
Leadership.....	27
Age	28
Section Four: Understanding the community – Regional profiles.....	29
Ethnicity	29
Occupations	30
Pay.....	31

Leadership.....	31
Age	31
Section Five: Understanding women’s experiences – ways of working	33
Flexible working	33
Customer facing roles and flexible working.....	33
Number of agencies worked at in the Public Sector.....	34
Section Six: Understanding women’s experiences – Inclusion	35
Inclusion by disability.....	36
Inclusion by sexual identity.....	36
Inclusion by ethnicity	38
Inclusion and flexible working	39
Section Seven: Understanding women’s experiences – Balancing work and life.....	40
Job satisfaction.....	40
Work life balance satisfaction and balancing caring responsibilities with work	41
Section Eight: Understanding women’s experiences – learning and development	43
Section Nine: Understanding women’s experiences – joining and staying in the Public Service.....	46
Joining the Public Service.....	46
Staying in the Public Service	47
Open-ended comments from women in Te Taunaki	48
Conclusion and next steps	62

Diversity and inclusion in the Public Service

Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) is an essential part of the Public Service. We want our Public Service workplaces to value, reflect and understand the communities that we're here to serve. The Public Service Act 2020 supports our D&I commitments with requirements on leaders to promote diversity and inclusiveness within our workforce and workplaces. Everyone in the Public Service is entitled to work in a safe and inclusive workplace, where people treat one another with respect.

For more than five years Te Kawa Mataaho has been focused on building a diverse and inclusive Public Service. We have made some significant gains in that time, but we know that there is still work to do. We value the voices and experiences of our people and collect the data to help give us a better picture of the experience of public servants and ideas of how our workplaces can be more welcoming and inclusive of a wide range of communities.

We are committed to doing more work and Te Taunaki provides an important benchmark and deeper understanding of where the focus needs to be. Today, the Public Service has a comprehensive approach to achieving diversity, equity and inclusion which includes three main work programmes.

- The [Papa Pounamu](#) work programme sets priorities for growing Public Service diversity and inclusion capability;
- the [Kia Toipoto](#) and [Pay Equity](#) work programmes provide plans to address pay gaps and workplace inequities;
- the [Positive and Safe Workplaces](#) programme helps agencies to create work environments where people enjoy working, are respected and can contribute to their potential.

About the data

Our Workforce Data and Te Taunaki Public Service Census provide important insights into the make-up and composition of the Public Service. It shows where the Public Service is doing well and where it needs to take steps to improve. It is important to note that these two sources are comprised only of data for the core Public Service therefore all reporting

in this document relates to employees of government departments and departmental agencies rather than workers across the wider Public Sector.

Workforce Data

Te Kawa Mataaho has been reporting on the demographics of the Public Service since 2000 in an annual collection of administrative workforce data from agencies.¹ The workforce data we collect gives us information about leadership in the Public Service, public servant remuneration/pay, diversity and inclusion and Māori Crown engagement and understanding, as well as public sector composition.

Te Taunaki | Public Service Census

Te Taunaki | Public Service Census 2021 (Te Taunaki) was New Zealand's first Public Service Census. About 60,000 public servants working in 36 agencies (departments and departmental agencies) were asked questions focusing on diversity, inclusion and wellbeing at work, a unified Public Service, and strengthening Māori Crown relationships. The final overall response rate was 63.1%, representing the views and experiences of about 40,000 public servants. New Zealand's first Public Service Census started on 11 May and closed in early June 2021.

Te Taunaki captured information across a range of demographic and job dimensions, allowing us to explore characteristics of the different genders of public servants and how feelings of inclusion were, particularly for those with genders other than the binary male and female and for those of different ethnicities. Understanding this helps us to gain a better picture about what's working well and where we need to do more to be an employer of choice for all of our workers.

One of the most important roles of the Public Service is to support the Crown in its relationships with Māori under Te Tiriti o Waitangi | Treaty of Waitangi. The Public Service Act 2020 also recognises the responsibility of senior leaders to develop the capability of the system to better engage with Māori and understand Māori perspectives.

Te Puni Kōkiri Ministry of Māori Development, Te Arawhiti Office for Māori Crown Relationships, and Te Taura Whiri I te Reo Māori Māori Language Commission were key

¹This will move to a quarterly collection from 2023.

partners with Te Kawa Mataaho in designing questions in Te Taunaki around Māori Crown capability, feeding into a whole of system approach to support organisation and leaders in this area.

Te Taunaki gave respondents opportunity to identify what their *'agency/department do to make you feel more comfortable about being yourself at work?'*. There was also an opportunity in Te Taunaki to identify if there was *'anything else about your experience of working for the New Zealand Public Service you would like to comment on?'*. Of those who identified as female, a total of 11,774 responded to either or both of the open-ended questions. These comments covered a broad range of work topics. In this report, we have included quotes and summaries of the comments from female public servants where they related to the topics being covered. Because some topics in the comments relate to areas where we do not have quantitative questions, there is also a summary of the most common themes from all the comments in a section at the end.

Data and comparisons

Workforce Data is administrative HR data collected directly from agencies and so provides an almost complete picture of some key demographics (e.g. age, gender, occupation, region, salary). The first part of this report – 'Understanding the community', Sections One to Four – principally uses Workforce Data from June 2022, the most recent data published from this source.

Te Taunaki also collected this demographic information (showing considerable alignment with Workforce Data), but with a response rate of 63%, it is not used where Workforce Data is available. However, Te Taunaki also collected further demographic information (e.g. sexual identity, caring responsibilities, use of flexible work) that is not available in Workforce Data, and gathered opinions and experiential data across a broad range of topics. The second part of this report – 'Understanding women's experiences', Sections Five to Nine – principally uses Te Taunaki data from May/June 2021.

This report is about females in the Public Service. Both Workforce Data and Te Taunaki have gender data, with representation at about 62% female, 37% male and less than 1%

of another or diverse gender.² Gender comparisons in this report are mostly between female and male, as public servants of diverse/another gender make up a very small group and report a significantly different experience across many variables compared to both females and males – their experiences are captured in another deep dive report. Where ethnic comparisons are made, they are between women of the ethnicity that is being analysed and those not of that ethnicity (e.g. proportions of Māori compared to non-Māori).

About the deep dive reports

Cross-agency Employee-led Networks (ELNs) were an important stakeholder of Te Taunaki Public Service Census and Te Kawa Mataaho engaged with them in the development and planning stage, consulting on the survey, and they helped increase response rates of members of their communities. After Te Taunaki was completed, we reached out to ELNs to see what questions we could answer for them based on the data that had been gathered in Te Taunaki or the Workforce Data. This proactive approach to information ensured that there was benefit for the ELNs in continuing to be involved in Te Taunaki.

The deep dive research papers that have been produced as part of this process present reporting on topics of interest to ELNs. Te Kawa Mataaho has now completed deep dive research for: We Enable Us (WEU), the Cross-Agency Rainbow Network (CARN), and Government Women's Network (GWN). The research covers the experiences reported in Te Taunaki by disabled public servants, and public servants who are transgender, intersex or of multiple/another gender/s or different sexual identities, and women in the Public Service.

Te Taunaki gives us just a start at understanding the effects of intersectionality on feelings of inclusion, but further work is needed to explore the combined effects of diversity dimensions. We are continuing to learn from what this data tells us, and the experiences of different communities and are working with the cross-agency ELNs on plans and

² Note that these are the figures from Workforce Data; the equivalent figures from Te Taunaki are 64.3% female, 35.2% male, and 0.5% another and/or multiple gender/s.

initiatives for the future and to help us achieve our goal of improving inclusion in our workplaces and for New Zealand's public servants.

From the Government Women's Network (GWN)...

The Government Women's Network is happy to see this Deep Dive into Gender. This report shows us that the efforts to improve. We can see great progress in many areas, as well as a continued need to focus on the experiences of the various intersecting identities held by women across the public service, including disabled women and women who are part of the rainbow community. We see also that Wāhine Māori and Pacific women generally reported lower inclusion than their colleagues. This is not good enough. To make change, we need to collaborate, build relationships, and work together across the system – this Deep Dive is a fantastic example of partnership between Te Kawa Mataaho and GWN. While there is clearly more to be done, especially when taking an intersectional lens, we can also celebrate the progress we have made. Looking forward, attention must be paid to the differences between female public servants of different ethnicities, their experiences in regions around Aotearoa, and continue the mahi to make the Public Service inclusive for all.

For this report on women in the Public Service, the questions that GWN asked were:

Understanding our community

- Where are our wāhine in the public service, by region and agency? What are their roles and pay? How old are they? What ethnic groups do they identify with?
- Where are our wāhine Pacific and Māori in the public service, by region and agency? What are their roles and pay? How old are they? What ethnic groups do they identify with?
- How does our community – wāhine in the public service - vary across the regions, by ethnicity?
- How does our community – wāhine in the public service - vary across the regions, by role, age, pay, and tier?
- How does access to flexible working vary across the regions?
- How does mobility across the public sector vary with intersectional factors and role/region?

Understanding women's experience

- How do intersectional factors impact on women's feelings of inclusion? (eg ethnicity, sexuality, disability)
- Are some of the indicators of lower levels of inclusion (eg gender, ethnicity, public-facing roles, lower pay or tier, less flexible working) more common in particular roles or in the regions?

- Is there a link between public-facing roles and a lower levels of access to flexible working?
 - Does that result in lower levels of inclusion?
- How satisfied are women in their jobs? How does this vary with intersectional factors, caring responsibilities and role/region?
- How satisfied are women with their work life balance? How does this vary with intersectional factors, caring responsibilities and role/region?
- Is there a link between gender and other intersectional-factors and regional location and access to learning and development and career opportunities?
- Do women perceive a link between gender/intersectional factors/location (outside Wellington) and their development and career opportunities – if so why?
- How do motivations for joining and staying in the public service vary for women of different ethnicities and in different regions and roles?

Section One: Understanding the community – Women in the Public Service

Unless noted otherwise, this section uses Workforce Data, as at 30 June 2022

The latest Workforce Data for 2022 shows 62.1% of the Public Service are female and 37.3% are male. Results from Te Taunaki | Public Service Census 2021 show a similar female/male split but show a greater number of those with other genders at 0.5% (0.4% who are another gender, 0.1% with multiple genders).³

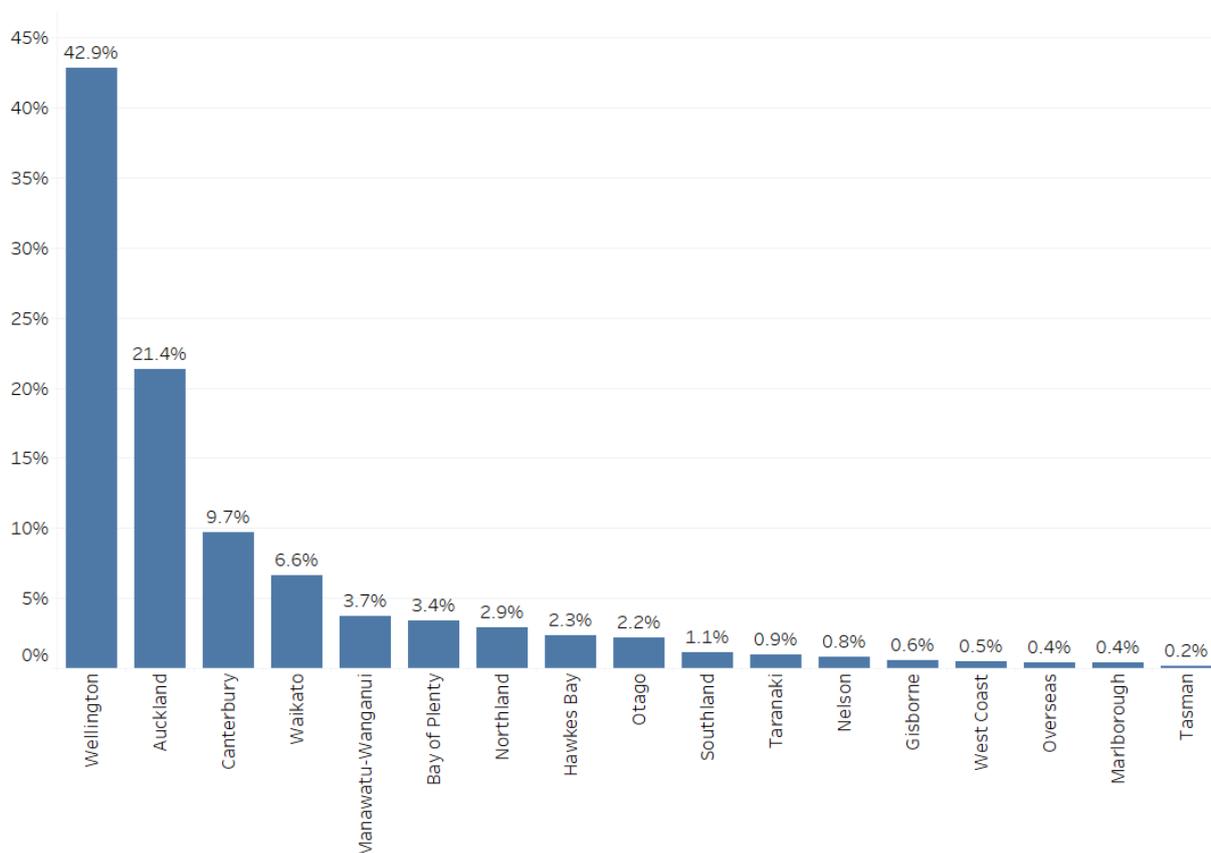
Female representation in the Public Service is at the highest level since first measured in 2000 (56.2%) and compares with 50.7% in the New Zealand working-age population in the year ending June 2022 (from [Stats NZ's Household Labour Force Survey](#)). The type of work in the Public Service may partly explain this high representation, as many public service occupations such as social workers, case workers and clerical and administration workers also have a high representation of women in the wider labour market.

Region

The distribution of female public servants across New Zealand was largely consistent with the Public Service in general, with 42.9% of female staff in Wellington (44.5% overall), 21.4% in Auckland (20.6% overall), 9.7% in Canterbury (9.7% overall), and 6.6% in Waikato (6.5% overall).

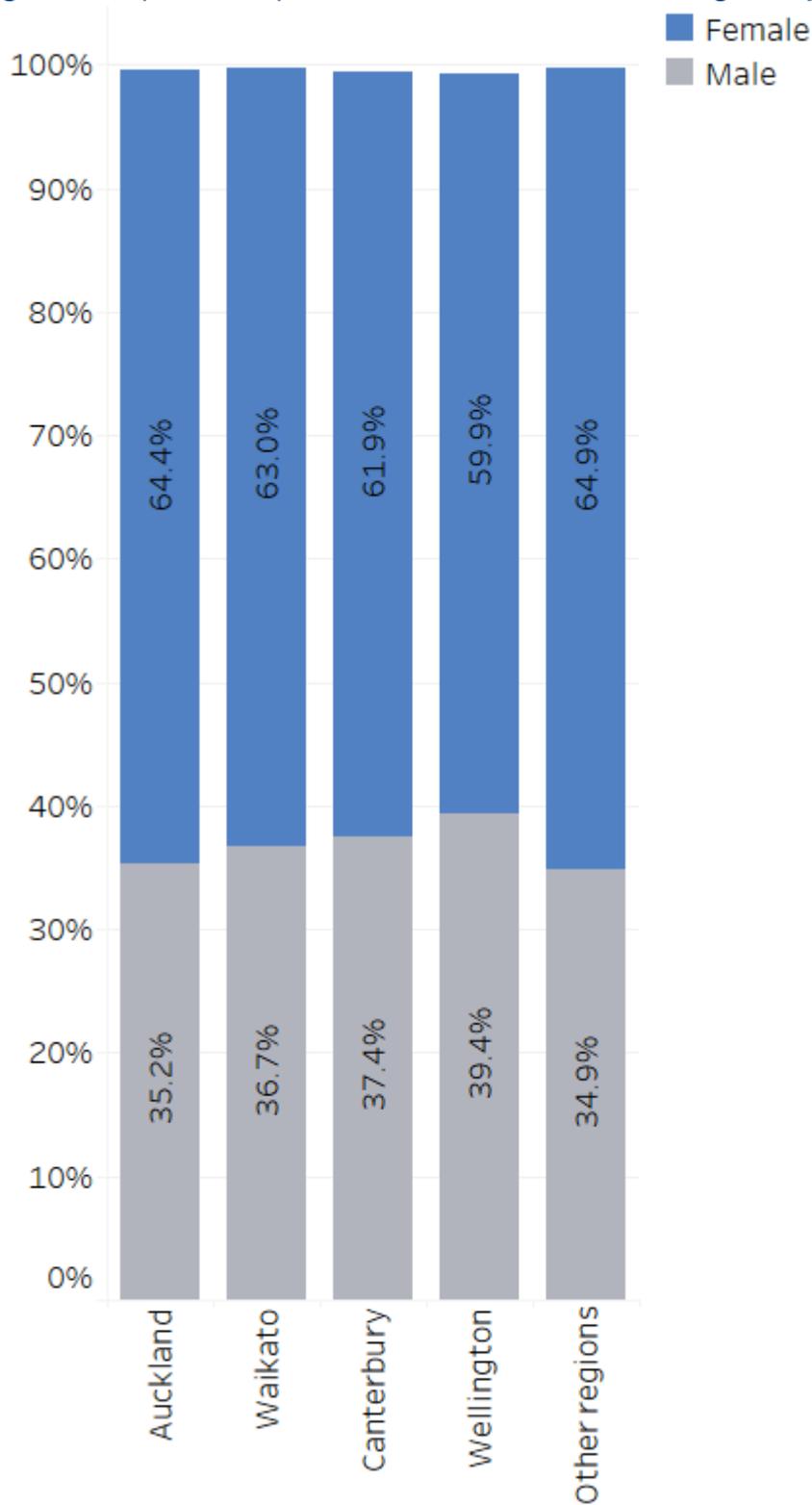
³ Note that those who are in the Workforce Data as another gender or unknown gender are included in calculations but not reported on due to the small size of the groups.

Figure 1: Proportion of female public servants across the main regions



Within those four largest regions, female public servants made up similar proportions of the workforce - Auckland had the highest (64.4%), followed by the Waikato (63.0%), Canterbury (61.9%), and Wellington (59.9%). In the regions with fewer staff, the proportion of female staff varied more, ranging from 55.0% of staff in Tasman to 74.5% in Gisborne.

Figure 2: Proportion of public servants within the main regions by gender



Please note that more in-depth regional information specific to Māori and Pacific female public servants is featured in Sections Two and Three of this report, while the distribution of ethnicities more widely, occupation groups, pay, leadership roles, and age profiles within regions are included in Section Four.

Agency

The agencies with the highest proportions of female public servants as at 30 June 2022 were the Ministry for Women (85.0% or 34 individuals) and the Education Review Office (82.8% or 188 individuals).

Proportion of female public servants within each agency⁴ - [Compare agencies percent female 2022 visualisation](#)

The agencies with the largest proportions of the overall female workforce in the Public Service were the Ministry of Social Development (16.3% or 6,284 individuals) and Corrections (12.4% or 4,787 individuals), which are also the two largest departments overall.

Occupations

Across the Public Service, the occupation group with the highest proportion of female public servants was Social, Health and Education Workers, with more than 1 in 5 female staff (21.6%) in that group. This was followed by Inspectors and Regulatory Officers (14.3%), and Information Professionals (13.6%). These are also the largest occupation groups across the Public Service overall, making up about half of all staff when combined.

Within the individual occupation groups, a significant majority of Clerical and Administrative Workers (82.3%) were female, as were Social, Health and Education Workers (74.4%), and Contact Centre Workers (73.7%). The occupation groups with the lowest proportions of female staff were ICT Professionals and Technicians (with only 33.8%), and Inspectors and Regulatory Officers (48.3%).

Across the Public Service overall, the lowest average salary by occupation was for Contact Centre Workers, followed by Clerical and Administrative Workers, and Inspectors and Regulatory Workers.⁵

⁴ Headcounts and FTEs for individual agencies can be found at [Guidance: Data drilldown and technical guidance - Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission](#)

⁵ Details can be found at [Workforce Data — Wage trends - Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission](#)

Just over 40% (40.6%) of public servants who responded to Te Taunaki had customer-facing roles, working directly with the public, external customers and clients, or people in their care, two-thirds (67.7%) of whom were female.

There can be compositional differences between the genders in terms of seniority and experience within occupational groups as well, although there is evidence that these gaps are reducing. For example, women made up 57.7% of policy roles at the advisor level in the Public Service in 2012, versus 33.6% of principal advisor positions. This gap has narrowed substantially by 2022, with women making up 61.4% of roles at advisor level and 54.9% at principal advisor level.

Part-time work is more likely to be taken up by females than males, with 5.2% of female staff working part-time, compared to 1.6% of males. Looking at Te Taunaki, the most common reason for wanting flexible working given by people who worked reduced hours was caring for children, at 56.1% of all respondents – this was also the reason with the most notable difference between females and males with 61.0% of females giving this as a reason, but only 36.9% of males.

Pay

As at 30 June 2022, the average salary was \$88,100 for women in the Public Service and \$95,400 for men, up 3.0% for men since 30 June 2021 and up 4.1% for women.

Since the Public Service Gender Pay Gap Action Plan was launched in 2018, further progress has been made to close the gender pay gap. The Public Service gender pay gap in 2022 was lower than it's ever been, at 7.7%. This represents a decrease of 0.9 percentage points since 2021, and 4.5 percentage points over the period of the Action Plan. By comparison, the national gender pay gap dropped by just 0.4 percentage points in the same period.

[Public Service gender pay gap trend visualisation](#)

Further information about pay gaps in the Public Service can be found on the Te Kawa Mataaho website, in the [Workforce Data — Pay gaps](#) section.

Further information about relevant comments in Te Taunaki | Public Service Census - [Pay](#)

Leadership

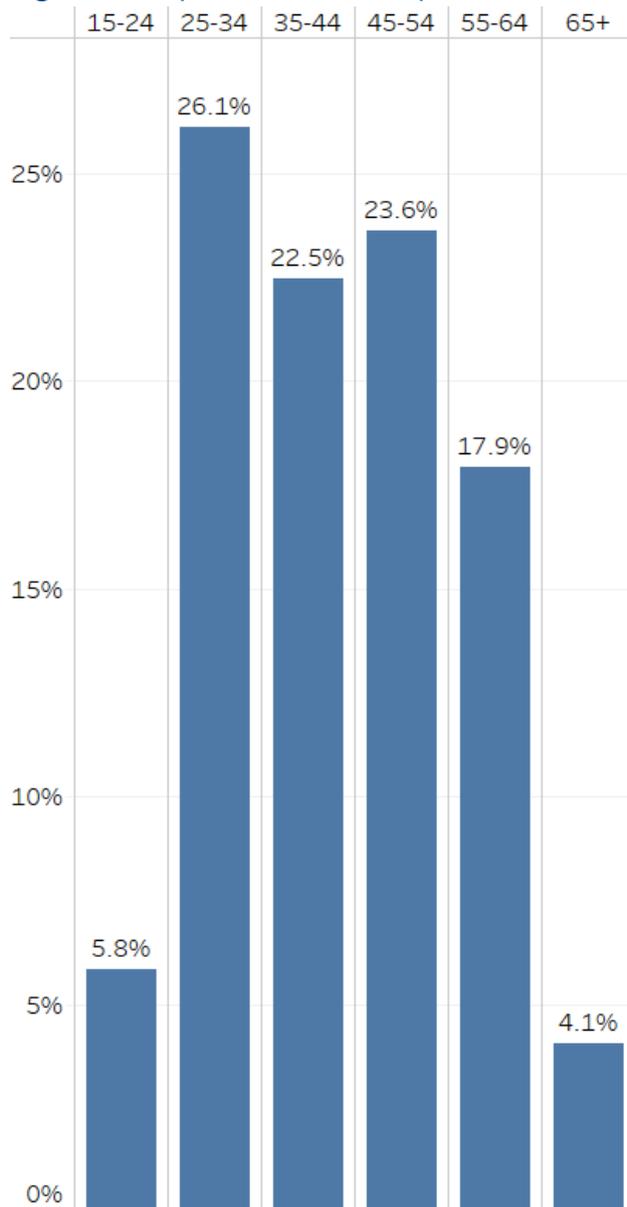
Female representation at the senior leadership level has increased strongly over the past decade, exceeding 50% in the last three years, but remains below the proportion of women in the Public Service. As at 30 June 2022, the percentage of women in senior management (Tiers 1 to 3) was 55.8%, up from 42.1% in 2012, while male representation is 43.9%. This record high female share of senior leaders has contributed to the decline in the gender pay gap.

[Female representation in the Public Service visualisation](#)

Age

The average age of the Public Service workforce as at June 2022 was 44.0 years, while the average age was slightly lower for female public servants at 43.4 years. The distribution across age groups was similar for male public servants as it was for female public servants although as noted, overall women tended to be slightly younger (male average was 45.0 years).

Figure 3: Proportion of female public servants across age groups



Ethnicity

Europeans made up the largest proportion of female public servants (65.0%), followed by Māori (18.3%), Asian (12.5%), Pacific (10.9%) and MELAA (2.0%), with 5.4% of an Other ethnicity.⁶ These were very similar to the proportions for all public servants, although female public servants were more likely to be Māori (16.7% of all public servants), and less likely to be Asian or of an Other ethnicity (13.4% and 6.2% of all public servants respectively).

⁶These percentages add to more than 100% as people can have more than one ethnicity.

Section Two: Understanding the community – Māori women in the Public Service

Unless noted otherwise, this section uses Workforce Data, as at 30 June 2022

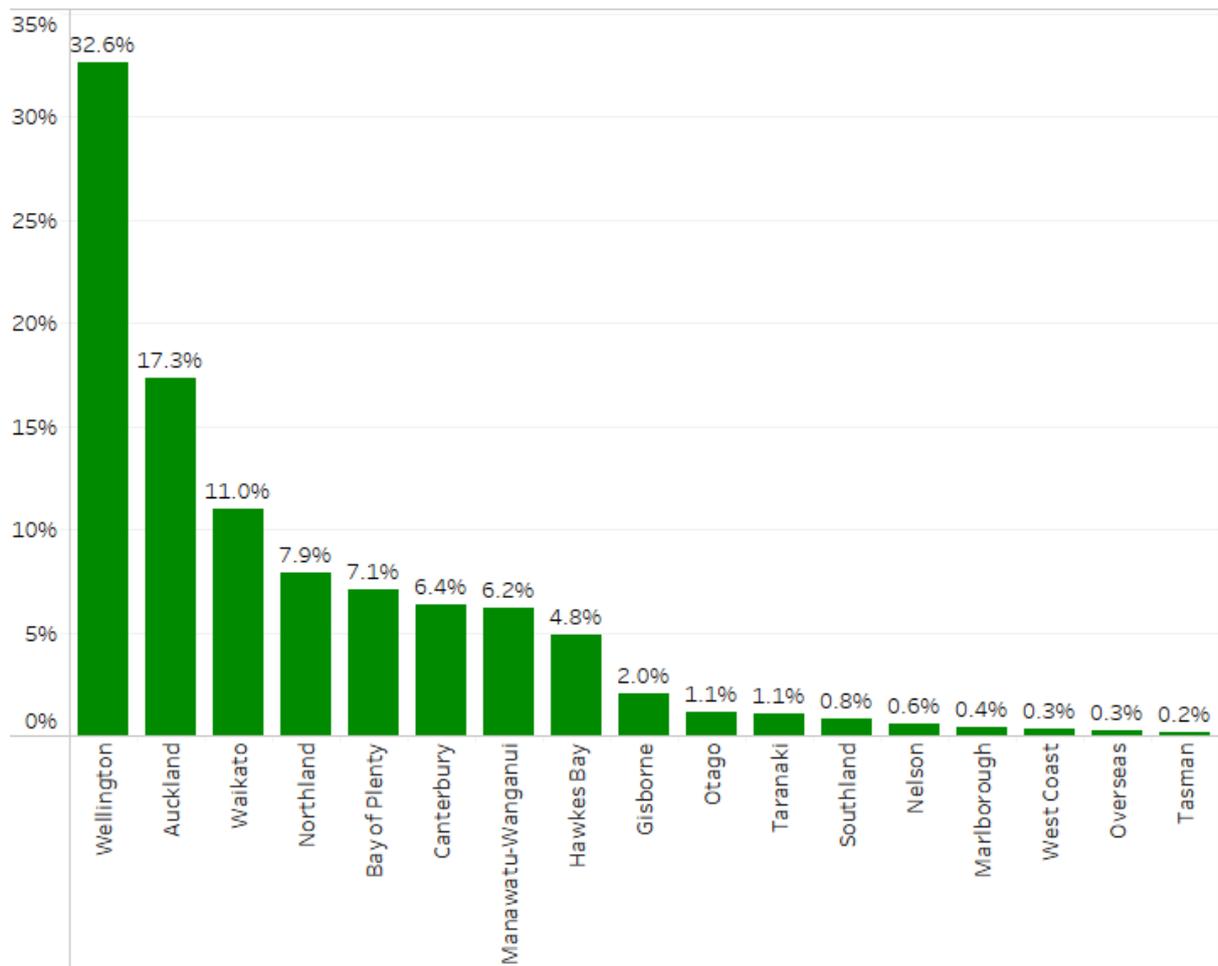
As mentioned in the previous chapter, 18.3% of females in New Zealand's Public Service are Māori according to Te Kawa Mataaho's Workforce Data and Māori women make up 11.4% of the Public Service overall. As a comparison, the proportion of females who were Māori in the New Zealand working age population was 15% in the Stats NZ Household Labour Force Survey as at June 2022, and the proportion of the New Zealand population as a whole who were female and Māori was 8.4% as at the 2018 Census.⁷

Region

The highest proportion of Māori female public servants across the country are based in Wellington (32.6%), followed by Auckland (17.3%), and the Waikato (11.0%). The regional distribution of female Māori staff closely matches that of male Māori staff – much more closely than the [distribution of female staff](#) in general. For example, Waikato has 11.0% of female Māori staff working there, similar to the 10.6% of male Māori staff, but considerably higher than the 6.6% of all female staff.

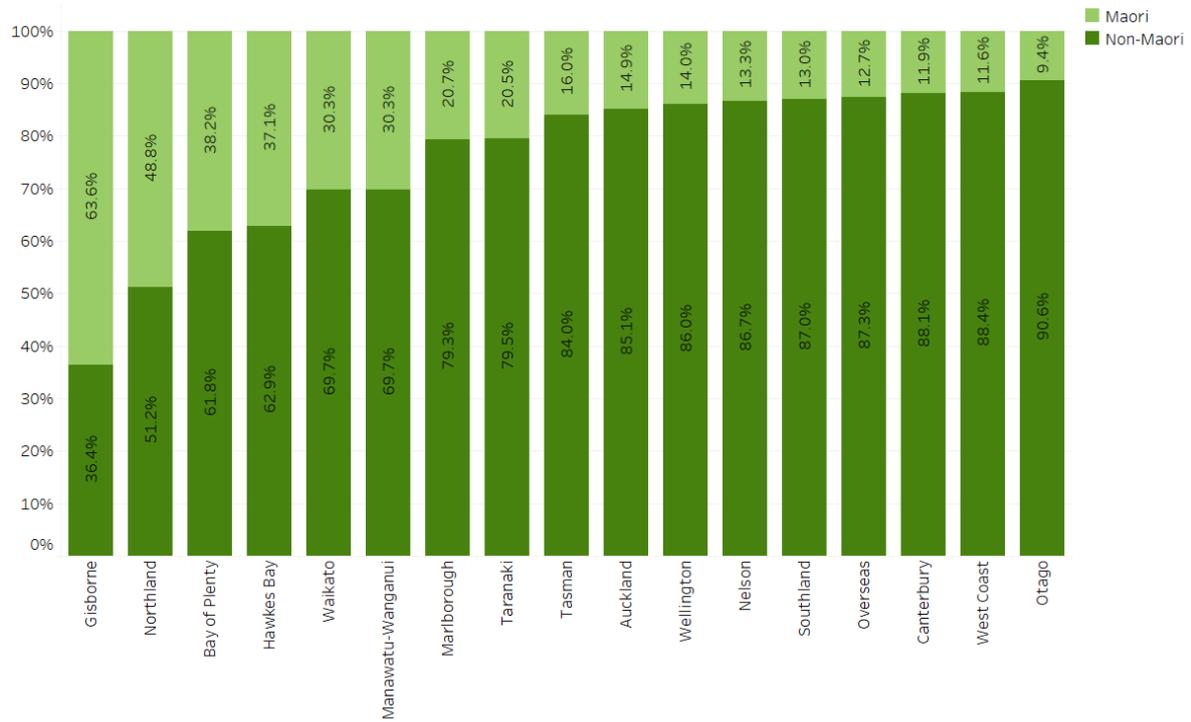
Figure 4: Proportion of female public servants who are Māori across regions

⁷ Data on working age population is from Stats NZ's Household Labour Force Survey.



Within regions, Māori public servants as a proportion of the female workforce ranged from 9.4% of those working in Otago to 63.6% of those working in Gisborne.

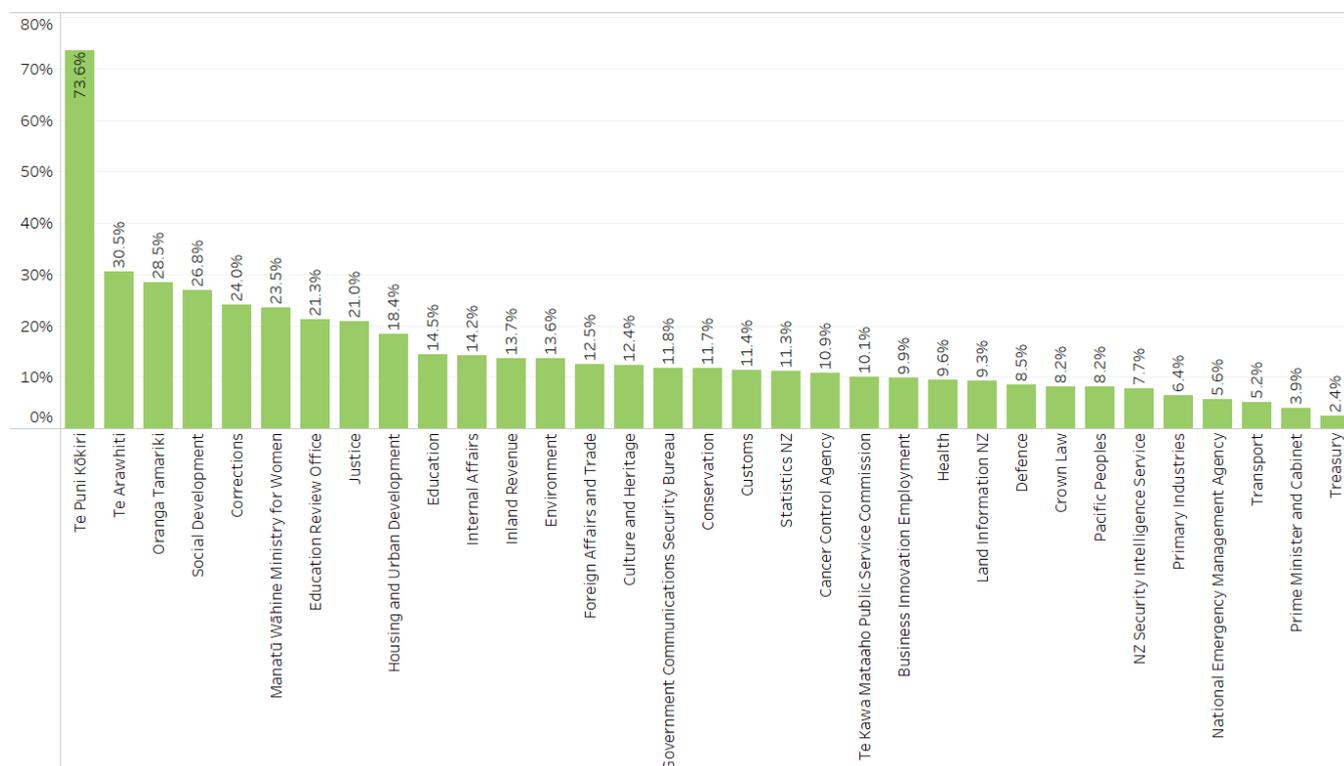
Figure 5: Proportion of female public servants within each region by Māori/non-Māori



Agency

The agencies with the highest proportions of female public servants who were Māori in 2022 were Te Puni Kokiri (73.6% of female staff), Te Arawhiti (30.5%), and Oranga Tamariki (28.5%).

Figure 6: Proportion of female public servants who are Māori within each agency



The agencies with the largest proportions of female public servants across the overall Māori workforce in the Public Service were the Ministry of Social Development (24.7%) and Corrections (17.0%), which are also the two largest departments overall.

Occupations

The occupations with the highest proportions of female public servants who were Māori were Social, Health and Education Workers (25.2% of female public servants), Inspectors and Regulatory Officers (19.0%), Managers (18.5%) and Contact Centre Workers (18.1%). The occupation groups with the smallest proportions of female staff who were Māori were ICT Professionals and Technicians (8.3%) and Other Professionals not elsewhere included (8.4%).

Of those who responded to Te Taunaki, just over half of female public servants who were Māori had customer-facing roles (56.4%), working directly with the public, external customers and clients, or people in their care. They were more likely than their non-Māori counterparts (39.2%) to be in such a role.

Pay

The graph below shows that in the Public Service men are paid more on average than women in each ethnic group, and Europeans are paid more on average than other ethnicities. Overall, the largest percent increases in 2022 went to Māori women and men.

[2022 Public Service average salaries by gender and ethnicity visualisation](#)

Leadership

As at 30 June 2022, 16.5% of female public servants in senior management (Tiers 1 to 3) were Māori. Overall for senior management (including other genders), 9.2% were Māori women.

As mentioned previously, the proportion of New Zealand's population who were Māori and female at the 2018 Census was 8.4%.

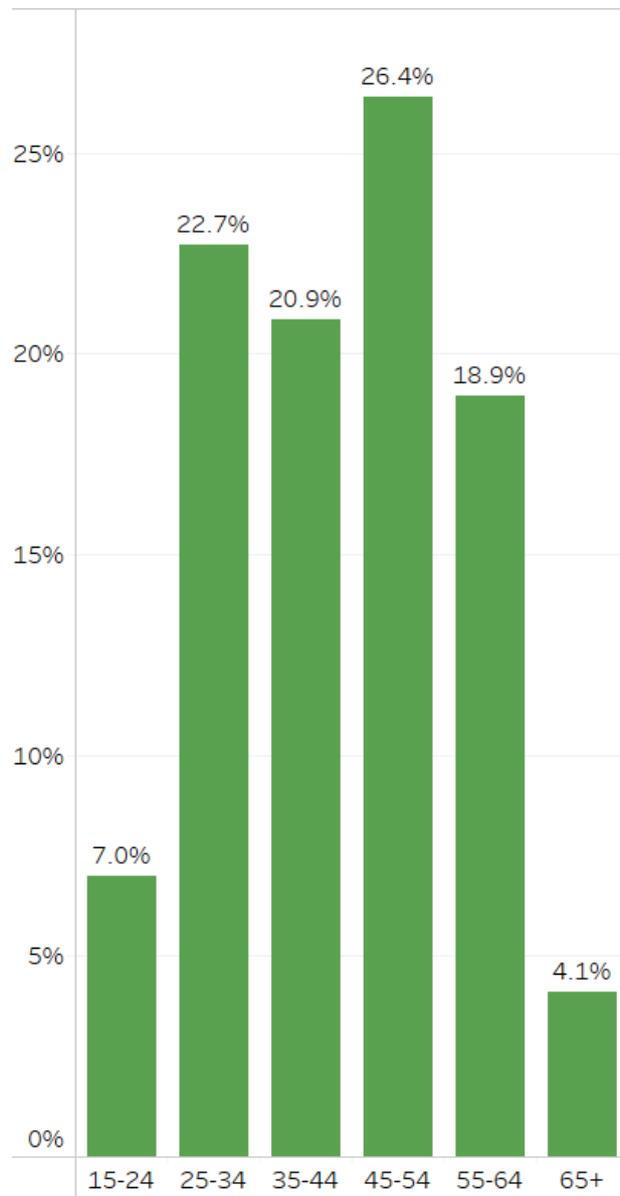
“I feel honoured to be a public servant but also frustrated with the lack of opportunities or pathways to support career advancement or professional development to enable me to reach my career goal within these sector.” – Wāhine Māori

“A healthy public sector needs more senior Māori leaders and not just in tagged Māori roles.” – Wāhine Māori

Age

The average age of female Māori public servants as at 30 June 2022 was 44.1 years, compared to 43.1 for female public servants who were non-Māori.

Figure 7: Proportion of female Māori public servants across age groups



Section Three: Understanding the community –Pacific women in the Public Service

Unless noted otherwise, this section uses Workforce Data, as at 30 June 2022

As mentioned previously, 10.9% of females in New Zealand’s Public Service are Pacific people according to Te Kawa Mataaho’s Workforce Data and Pacific women make up 6.8% of the Public Service overall. As a comparison, the proportion of females who were Pacific people in the New Zealand working age population was 6.4% in the Stats NZ Household Labour Force Survey as at June 2022, and the proportion of the New Zealand population as a whole who were female and Pacific people was 4.0% as at the 2018 Census.⁸

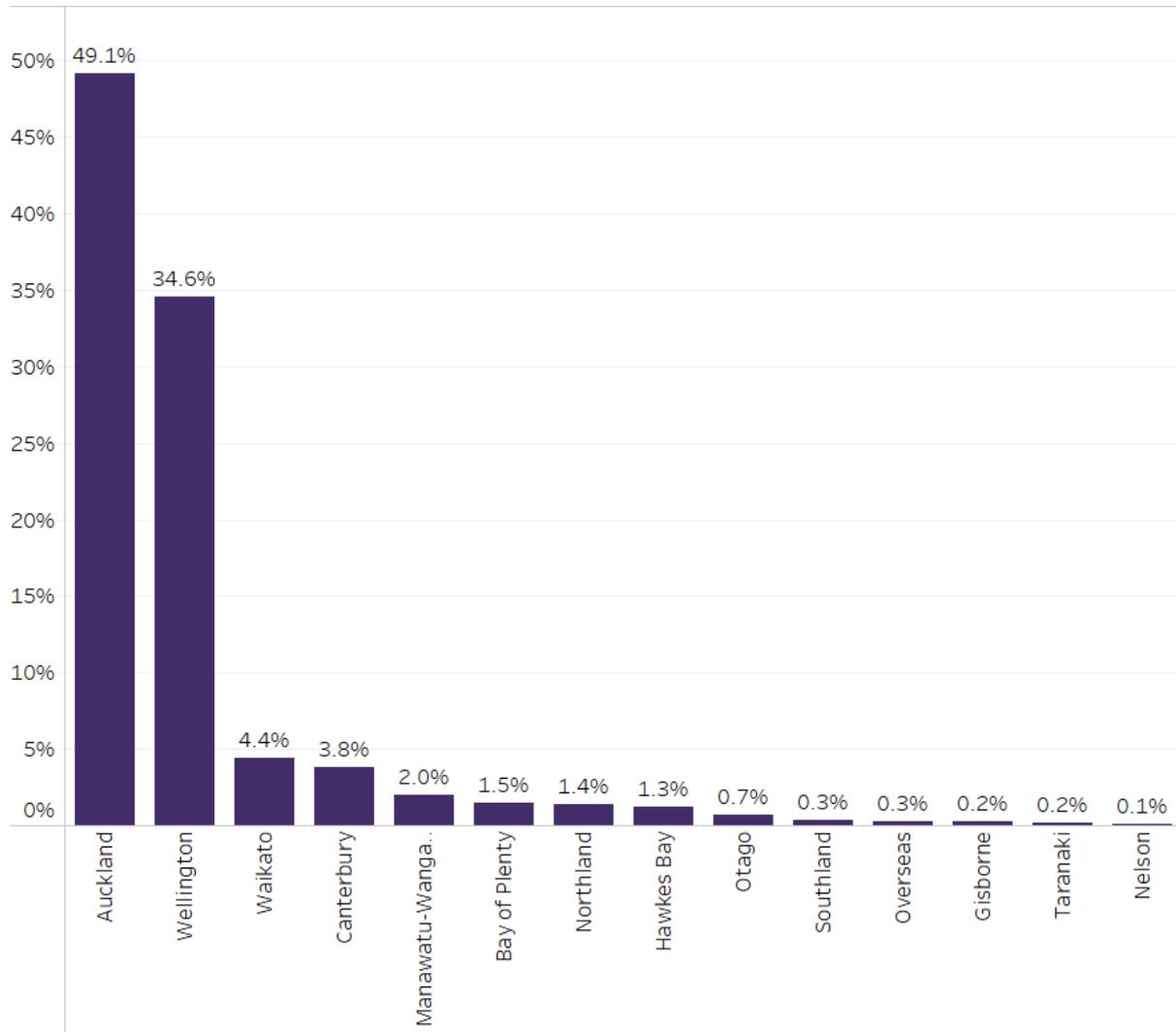
Region

Almost half of female public servants of Pacific ethnicity (49.1%) are based in Auckland, while the majority of the rest are in Wellington (34.6%). The regional distribution of female Pacific staff varies somewhat from male Pacific staff, with considerably fewer men based in Auckland (39.6%), but is much more similar to Pacific males than female staff in general. For example, 3.8% of female Pacific staff work in Canterbury, compared to 6.0% of male Pacific staff or 9.7% of all female staff.

As a proportion of the female workforce within regions, Pacific public servants were the greatest in Auckland, where they made up a quarter (25.2%) of women in the region. For the other regions, Pacific public servants made up between 1.8% (Nelson) and 8.8% (Wellington) of the female workforce. Note some regions are not represented as their results have been suppressed for confidentiality purposes.

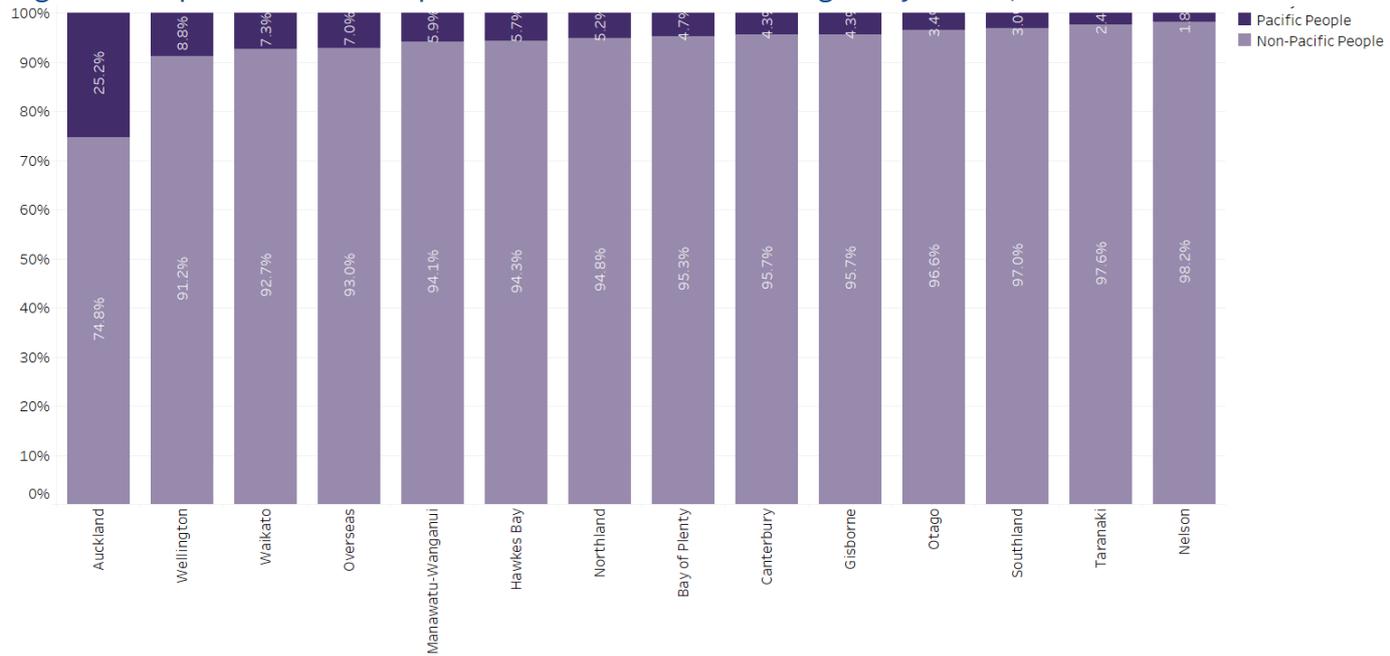
⁸ Data on working age population is from Stats NZ’s Household Labour Force Survey.

Figure 8: Proportion of female public servants who are Pacific peoples across the main regions⁹



⁹ Note that some regions were included in the overall calculations but not in the graph as the size of the group in each was too small to publish. This applies to both the proportions across and within regions.

Figure 9: Proportion of female public servants within each region by Pacific/non-Pacific¹⁰

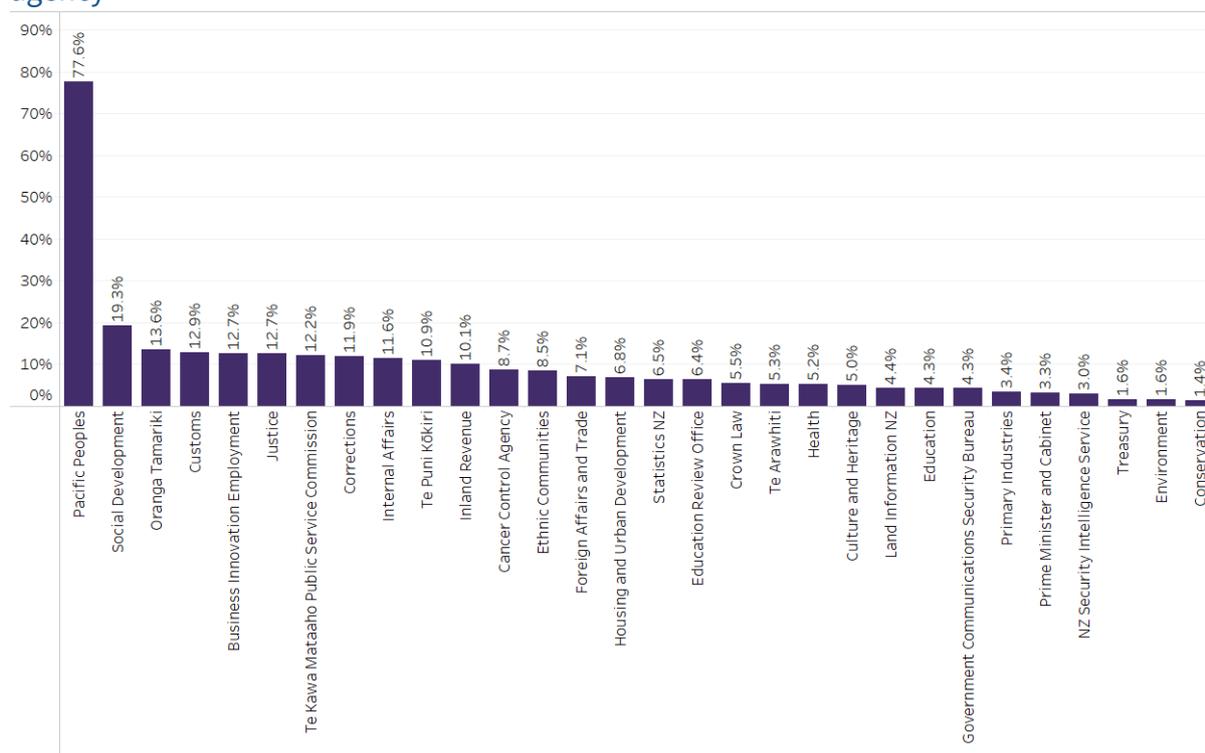


Agency

The agency with the highest proportions of female public servants who were Pacific people in 2022 was the Ministry for Pacific Peoples (77.6%).

¹⁰ Note that some regions were included in the overall calculations but not in the graph as the size of the group in each was too small to publish. This applies to both the proportions across and within regions.

Figure 10: Proportion of female public servants who are Pacific peoples within each agency



The agencies with the largest proportions of female public servants across the overall Pacific workforce in the Public Service were the Ministry of Social Development (29.7%) and Corrections (14.1%), which are also the two largest departments overall.

Occupations

The occupations with the highest proportions of female public servants who were Pacific people were Contact Centre Workers (20.5% of females in this occupation were Pacific people), Inspectors and Regulatory Officers (15.9%), and Social, Health and Education Workers (13.0%).

The occupation groups with the smallest proportion of Pacific people amongst the female workforce were Other Professionals not elsewhere included (2.9% of females were Pacific people), ICT Professionals and Technicians (5.1%), and Policy Analysts (5.8%).

For female public servants who were Pacific people, there was a higher proportion in customer-facing roles (61.4%) than those who were not Pacific people (40.7%).

Pay

The graph below shows that in the Public Service men are paid more on average than women in each ethnic group, and Europeans are paid more on average than other ethnicities. Pacific women and Pacific men have the lowest average salaries in the Public Service.

[2022 Public Service average salaries by gender and ethnicity visualisation](#)

The occupation groups mentioned in the section above with higher proportions of Pacific people in the female workforce tended to be lower paid while the ones where Pacific people were a lower proportion of the female workforce tended to be towards the higher end of the pay scale.¹¹

“For almost 15 years in the public service, I feel that the pay scale isn't that great... It's like a taboo topic, you get what you're given.” – Pasifika public servant

Leadership

As at 30 June 2022, 5.4% of female leaders in senior management (Tiers 1 – 3) were Pacific people. Overall for senior management, 3.0% were Pacific women. As mentioned previously, the proportion of New Zealand's population as at the 2018 Census who were female and Pacific peoples was 4.0%.

“Having served as a public servant for [20+] years, I am saddened to see the lack of Pacific people in leadership roles. Speaking for myself, I know that I am a very good leader, and have all the skills required to be in a senior leadership role, however, I also believe that

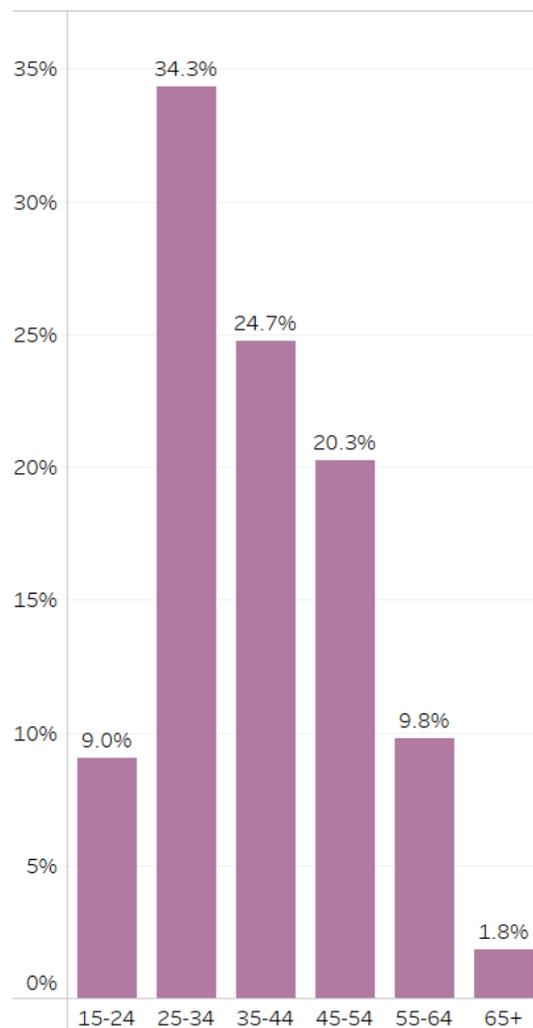
¹¹ Further information on average salaries by occupation can be found at [Workforce Data — Wage trends - Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission](#).

there is systemic racism that limits the creative thinking of some leaders, but also the fear of giving something that is unfamiliar, a go.”

Age

The average age of female Pacific public servants was 39.4 years as at 30 June 2022, compared to 43.8 years for non-Pacific people.

Figure 11: Proportion of female public servants who are Pacific people across age groups



Section Four: Understanding the community – Regional profiles

Unless noted otherwise, this section uses Workforce Data, as at 30 June 2022

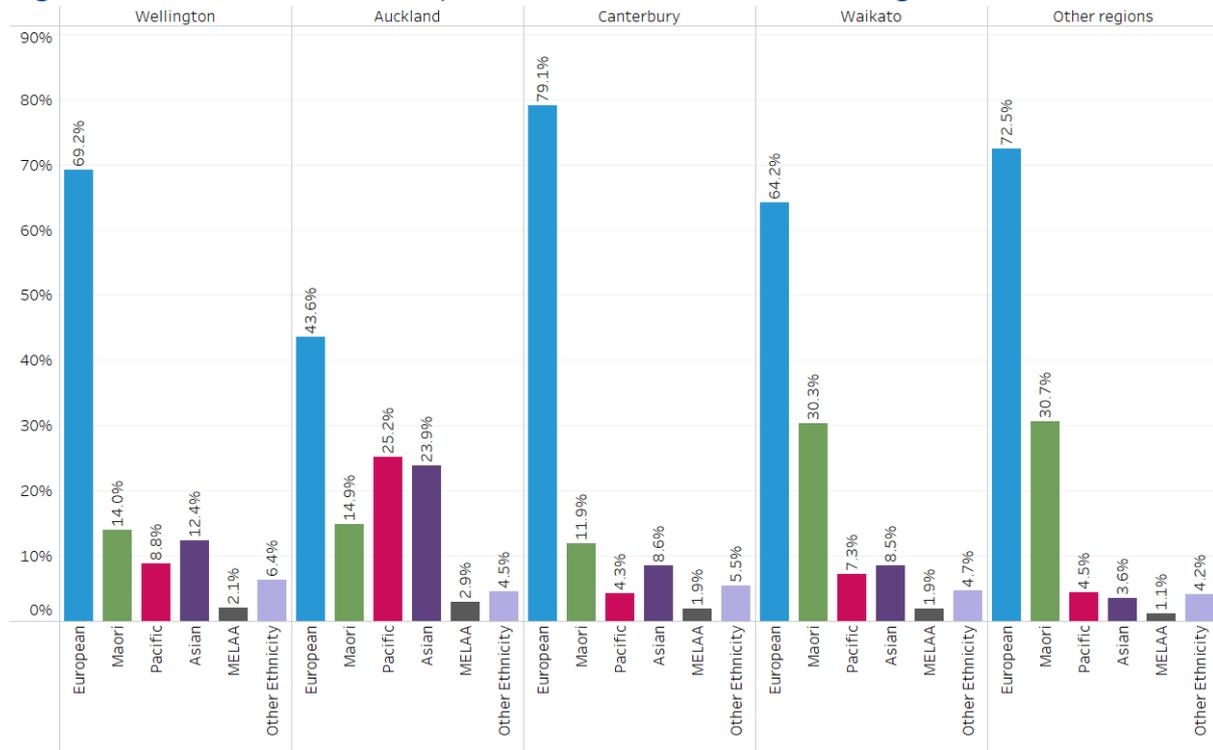
Ethnicity

Within the four main regions by Public Service staff (Wellington, Auckland, Canterbury, and Waikato), Auckland had the lowest proportion of women with European ethnicity (43.6%) and the highest proportions of most of the other main ethnic categories: Pacific (25.2%), Asian (23.9%), and MELAA (2.9%). Details on the ethnic make up of the general Auckland population can be found on the Stats NZ website at [Place Summaries | Auckland Region | Stats NZ](#)

Canterbury had the highest proportion of women with European ethnicity (79.1%) and the lowest proportions of Māori (11.9%) and Pacific (4.3%) female staff.

As mentioned earlier in the report, Waikato had the highest proportion of Māori female public servants of the four main regions (30.3%). Waikato also had the lowest proportions of Asian (8.5%) and MELAA (1.9%) female staff, both of which figures were very marginally lower than Canterbury.

Figure 12: Ethnicities for female public servants within the main regions



Occupations

More than half of the female public servants in Auckland were either Social, Health and Education Workers (27.7%) or Inspectors and Regulatory Officers (27.6%).

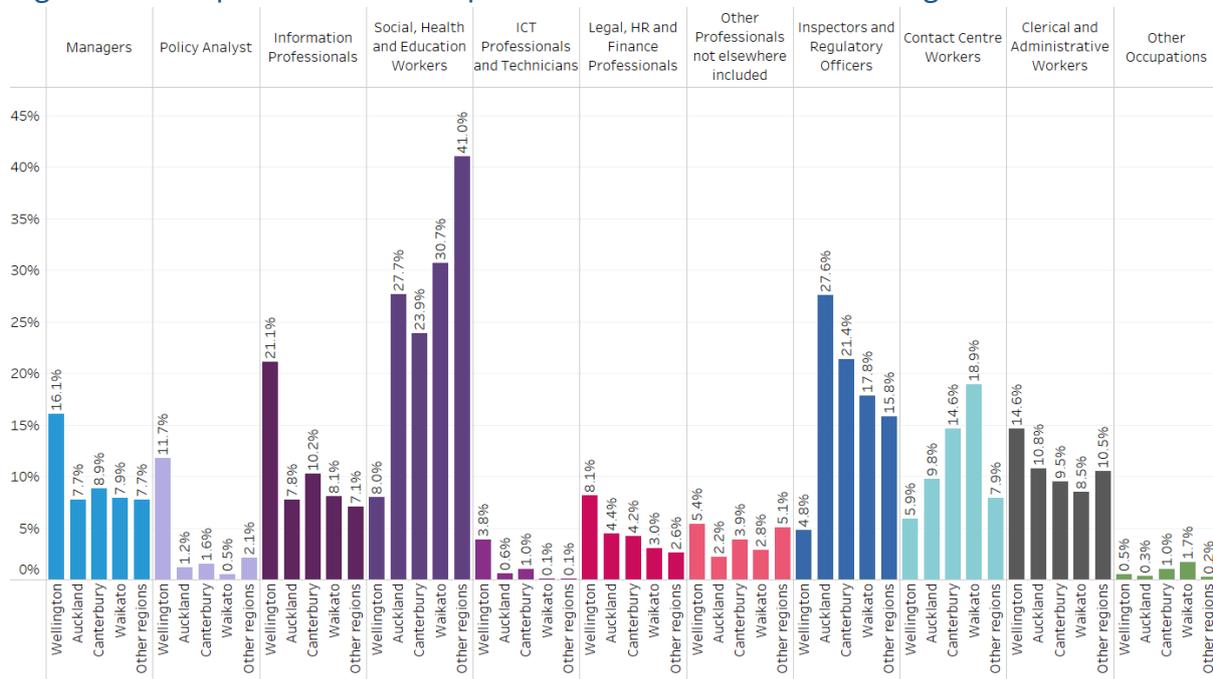
Similarly, around half of the female public servants in the Canterbury region were also either Social, Health and Education Workers (23.9%) or Inspectors and Regulatory Officers (21.4%).

Waikato had the highest proportions of Social, Health and Education Workers (30.7%) and Contact Centre Workers (18.9%) across the four main regions, and the lowest proportions of ICT Professionals and Technicians (0.1%), Policy Analysts (0.5%), Legal, HR and Finance Professionals (3.0%), and Clerical and Administrative Workers (8.5%).

The Public Service in Wellington has a very different occupational profile compared to other regions (for both male and female). Female public servants in Wellington had much higher proportions of Information Professionals (21.1%), Managers (16.1%), Clerical and

Administrative Workers (14.6%), Policy Analysts (11.7%), and Legal, HR and Finance Professionals (8.1%), than the other main regions.

Figure 13: Occupations for female public servants across the main regions



Pay

The average full-time equivalent salary for female public servants in Wellington (\$101,300) was considerably higher than for those in Auckland (\$78,000), Canterbury (\$79,500), Waikato (\$76,900) and other regions (\$78,100). This is not surprising, given the higher proportions of higher paying occupations located in the Wellington region, and this pattern is the case for the Public Service as a whole regardless of gender.

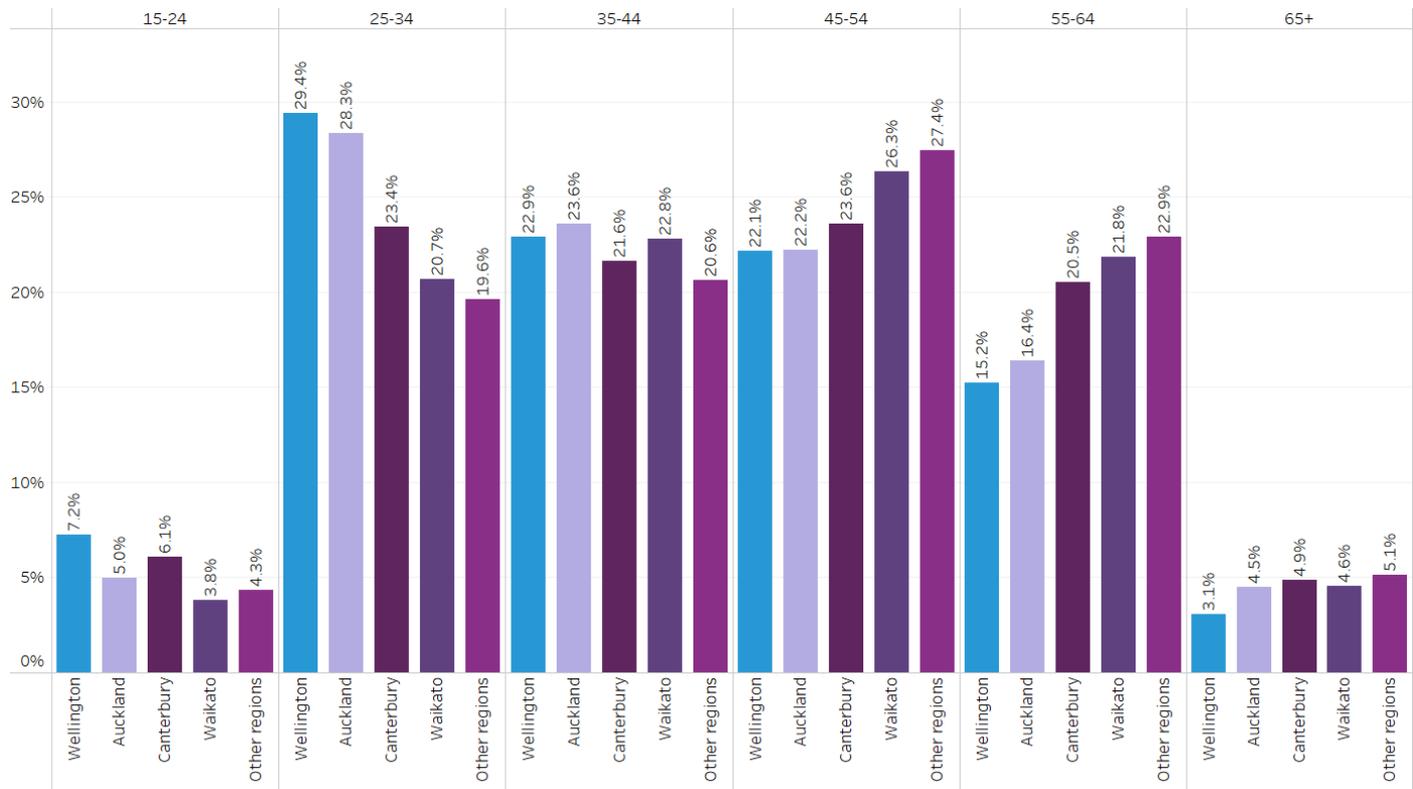
Leadership

The majority of female senior management (Tiers 1 to 3) were located in the Wellington region (88.9%) as at 30 June 2022, similar to the proportion of male senior management roles (85.9%).

Age

The average age of female public servants in Wellington (41.8 years) was slightly younger than for the other main regions (43.0 for Auckland, 44.5 for Canterbury, 45.7 for Waikato and 46.1 for the other regions). This was a pattern that was true across all genders.

Figure 14: Proportion of female public servants across age groups by region



Section Five: Understanding women's experiences – ways of working

Unless noted otherwise, this section uses data from Te Taunaki, as at May/June 2021

Flexible working

According to those who responded to Te Taunaki, a large proportion of women across the Public Service (79.9%) used some form of flexible working, slightly more than men (75.0%) and slightly less than people of another or multiple genders (81.1%).¹² When split out across the main regions, female usage of flexible working was higher in Wellington (88.9%) than in Canterbury (75.7%), Waikato (75.3%), Auckland (72.3%) and other regions¹³ (71.5%).

When looking at the types of flexible working individually, the differences across regions were relatively small except for work locations. Working from home was used by considerably more female public servants in Wellington (82.8%) than elsewhere (69.3% in Auckland, 73.0% in Canterbury, 72.9% in Waikato, and 63.5% in other regions. Wellington female public servants were less likely, however, to be working from another site (15.6%) when compared to the other regions (21.3% Auckland, 24.1% for Canterbury, 22.9% for Waikato and 25.7% for Other regions)

Customer facing roles and flexible working

A higher proportion of female public servants worked in customer facing roles (42.6%) than male (36.9%) or another gender or multiple gender/s (39.4%). The proportion of female public servants in Wellington who worked in customer facing roles (21.9%) was much lower than for any of the other regions (61.1% of those in Auckland, 53.0% in Canterbury, 58.4% in Waikato and 59.7% in other regions).

Public servants in customer facing roles were less likely to be using some form of flexible working than those who were not in such roles. For female public servants, these

¹² The types of flexible working that people were asked about were: Flexible start and finish times or flexible break times; job-sharing; working reduced hours; working from home; working from a different site, other than from home; flexi-leave (e.g. study leave, trading salary for additional leave); compressed hours; Other – please specify.

¹³ Including overseas and multiple regions

proportions were 68.7% of customer facing workers who used flexible working compared to 88.3% of non-customer facing workers.

Number of agencies worked at in the Public Sector

One way to look at job mobility is to look at the number of places people have worked at and/or the total time they have spent in the sector they work in. In Te Taunaki, respondents were asked how many Public sector¹⁴ agencies they had worked for during the time they had worked across the sector, as well as how long they had worked in their role, agency, in any agency of the Public Service, and in the wider Public sector.

The average number of Public Sector agencies that female public servants had worked in varied somewhat by region, with Wellington having the highest average at 2.4 agencies. Staff in the other main regions had an average of either 1.7 or 1.8 agencies.

When breaking it down by amount of time spent working in the Public Sector, this difference between Wellington and the other regions typically increased the longer people had been working in the sector, peaking at 15 to 20 years tenure, when the average in Wellington was 3.1 agencies, compared to 1.7 to 1.9 agencies elsewhere.

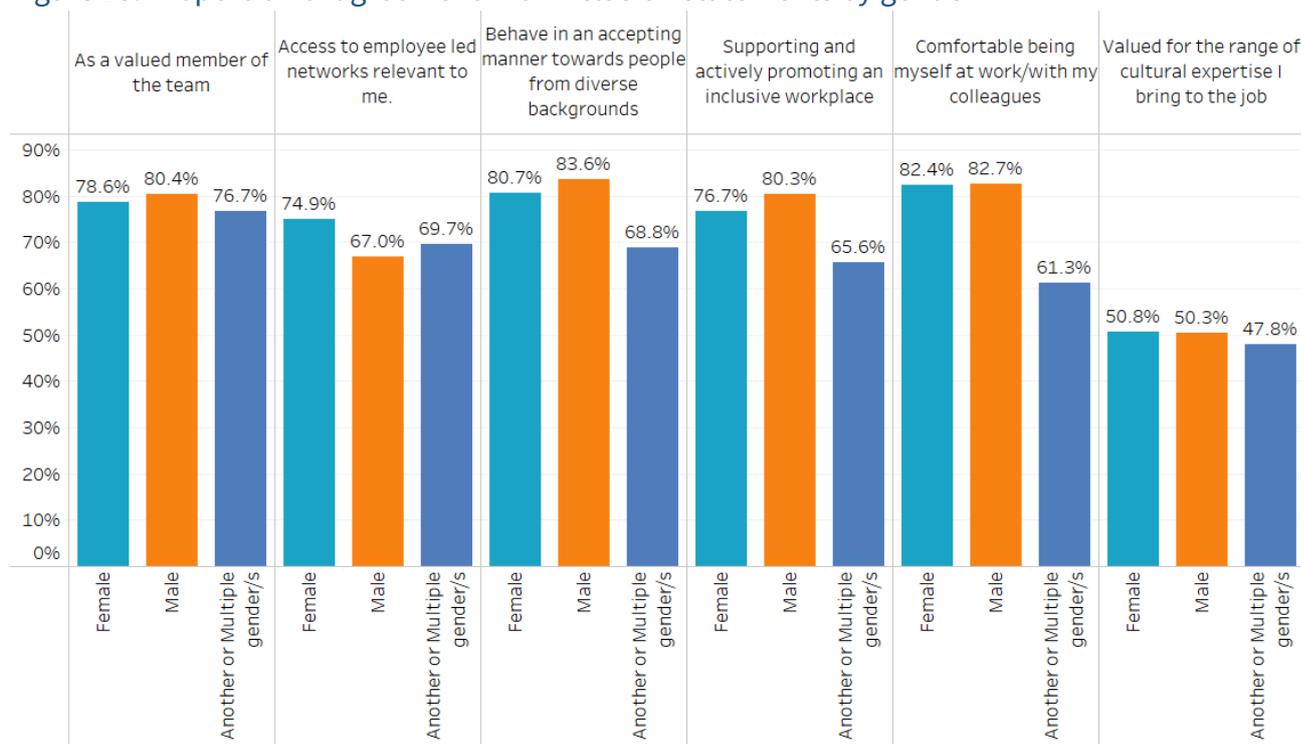
¹⁴ Public sector refers to a wider set of organisations– it includes Public Service departments, Crown agents, crown entities, other central and local government agencies, Crown owned companies, schools and tertiary education institutes.

Section Six: Understanding women’s experiences – Inclusion

Unless noted otherwise, this section uses data from Te Taunaki, as at May/June 2021

As part of Te Kawa Mataaho’s work on inclusion using Te Taunaki data, we combined several of the key inclusion related questions together to create an average inclusion score. Using this score, overall feelings of inclusion were slightly more positive for males compared to females. This effect was statistically significant but small and was not consistent across all the inclusion questions.

Figure 15: Proportion of agreement with inclusion statements by gender¹⁵



¹⁵ The full wording of the question was:

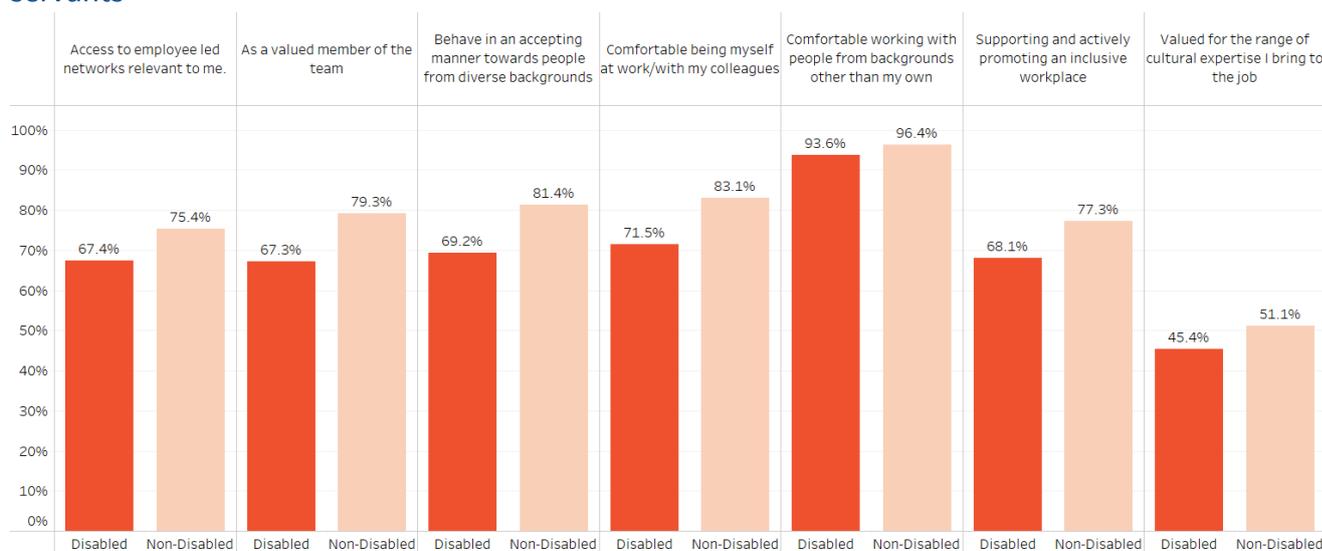
Please rate your levels of agreement with the following statements about diversity and inclusion.

- The agency I work for supports and actively promotes an inclusive workplace
- I have access to employee led networks relevant to me
- The people in my workgroup behave in an accepting manner towards people from diverse backgrounds
- I feel accepted as a valued member of the team
- I am valued for the range of cultural expertise I bring to the job
- I feel comfortable working with people from backgrounds other than my own
- I feel comfortable being myself at work / with my colleagues

Inclusion by disability

As was the pattern overall with disabled public servants, female public servants with functional limitations reported lower feelings of inclusion across the full range of inclusion questions in Te Taunaki.¹⁶ For example, 72% of female disabled public servants felt comfortable being themselves at work compared to 83% of female non-disabled employees.

Figure 16: Agreement with inclusion questions by disabled/non-disabled for female public servants



Inclusion by sexual identity

The inclusion areas where straight or heterosexual female public servants differed most from their sexual minority colleagues were:

- feeling comfortable being themselves at work/with their colleagues (83.4% for straight or heterosexual female public servants compared to 77.1% for sexual minorities)
- the people in their workgroup behaving in an accepting manner towards people from diverse backgrounds (81.6% for straight or heterosexual compared to 76.3% for sexual minorities)

¹⁶ The questions used in Te Taunaki to measure disability (the Washington Group Short Set of Questions) are an internationally valid and reliable way of collecting disability information, but they also have limitations. The activities asked about are those that are most often found to limit an individual’s participation in everyday life, but they don’t capture all disabilities or the prevalence of disability.

Looking at the breakdowns across the sexual minorities individually for those two questions, the lowest levels of agreement were for female public servants who selected ‘other’ in the sexual identity question (ie. other than straight or heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual).

Figure 17: Agreement with inclusion questions by sexual identity for female public servants



Inclusion by ethnicity

The results from Te Taunaki show that feelings of inclusion within the Public Service varied across ethnicities. While most of these differences were small, many were statistically significant. Being Māori or Pacific was predictive of lower feelings of inclusion in general, while being European was predictive of slightly higher feelings of inclusion.¹⁷

Europeans were significantly more likely to have a positive view of their team's and their agency's efforts to be inclusive, followed by Asians, while Māori and Pacific peoples indicated the least positive experiences.

For female public servants, those who identified as Māori similarly had lower feelings of inclusion than their non-Māori colleagues, although most of these differences were not large. The two most notable differences were when it came to agreeing that the agency they worked for supported and actively promoted an inclusive workplace (71% for female public servants who were Māori compared to 79% for non-Māori) and that people behave in an accepting manner towards people from diverse backgrounds (75% for female public servants who were Māori compared to 82% for non-Māori). The one exception to the pattern was female public servants who were Māori being more likely to feel valued for the range of cultural expertise they brought to the job (58% for female public servants who were Māori compared to 49% for non-Māori).

For those female public servants who identified as Pacific people, the pattern was very similar, with overall feelings of inclusion typically lower than for their non-Pacific colleagues. Again, the two most notable differences were in perspectives of support and promotion of an inclusive workplace (71% of female public servants who were Pacific people agreeing compared to 78% of non-Pacific people) and of people behaving in an accepting manner towards people from diverse backgrounds (75% for female public servants who were Pacific compared to 81% for non-Pacific). Two exceptions to the overall lower feelings of inclusion saw Pacific female staff more likely to feel valued for the range

¹⁷ See Inclusion Deep Dive at [Feelings of inclusion for different groups and communities - Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission](#)

of cultural expertise they brought (63% of female public servants who were Pacific people compared to 50% of non-Pacific people) and to feel they had access to employee led networks relevant to them (77% of female public servants who were Pacific people compared to 75% of non-Pacific people).

Inclusion and flexible working

Those female public servants who used flexible working had higher levels of inclusion across all relevant questions than those who didn't.

Female public servants in customer facing roles had lower feelings of inclusion; the only exception being the extent to which they felt valued for the range of cultural expertise they brought to their job (53% of females in customer facing roles compared to 49% of those in non-customer facing roles).

Combined, this typically meant that female staff in customer facing roles who weren't using flexible working reported the lowest levels of inclusion (compared to those in non-customer facing roles who were using flexible working). This was most notable in people's belief that their agency supported and actively promoted an inclusive workplace (64% vs 82%) and in access to employee led networks relevant to them (64% vs 81%).

Section Seven: Understanding women's experiences – Balancing work and life

Unless noted otherwise, this section uses data from Te Taunaki, as at May/June 2021

Job satisfaction

Female public servants had a relatively high level of job satisfaction (69.2%), similar to male public servants (68.8%). This only had minimal changes by main regions or based on whether or not the respondents had caring responsibilities.

Differences in job satisfaction by ethnicity were typically very small amongst female public servants. These differences were slightly larger for MELAA and Other ethnicities, both having slightly lower levels of job satisfaction: 65.7% of female public servants who were MELAA were satisfied compared to 69.5% of non-MELAA, while 66.2% of female staff of Other ethnicities were satisfied compared to 69.5% for those not in that ethnic group.

There were some variations across occupations when it came to job satisfaction amongst female public servants. Managers and ICT Professionals and Technicians had the highest levels of satisfaction (75.9% and 74.1% respectively) and Contact Centre Workers had the lowest (61.5%).

Disabled female public servants also had lower levels of job satisfaction (58.2%) than their non-disabled colleagues (69.9%), which was reflective of disabled public servants in general having lower levels of job satisfaction.

Female public servants with minority sexual identities also had lower rates of job satisfaction (64.8%) than their straight or heterosexual colleagues (70.0%) and this difference was slightly larger for female public servants than it was for other genders.

Work life balance satisfaction and balancing caring responsibilities with work

Half (50.1%) of the female respondents in Te Taunaki were satisfied with the balance between their working life and their life outside of work. Men were slightly more likely to be satisfied with their work-life balance than women (56.2%), while those of another gender or multiple genders were considerably less satisfied (38.8%).

By occupation group, female public servants who were Social, Health and Education workers have the lowest rates of work-life balance satisfaction (42.9%), followed by Managers (46.2%), and Inspectors and Regulatory Officers (46.8%). The highest levels of satisfaction were amongst ICT Professionals and Technicians (67.1%). The largest difference between men and women was in the Managers group, with 56.6% of male Managers satisfied with their work-life balance. Across management level, this was most pronounced at the highest levels, with 42.6% of women in Tiers 1 to 3 feeling satisfied, compared to 56.1% of men.

There were not large differences in the rates of satisfaction with work-life balance amongst female public servants across the main regions but those in Canterbury (52.1%) and Wellington (52.0%) did have slightly higher satisfaction than those in Auckland (48.7%), Waikato (47.1%) and other regions (47.2%).

Female public servants who are disabled had a considerably lower rate of satisfaction with work-life balance (36.7%) than their non-disabled female colleagues (50.9%), a gap that was seen consistently across genders.

There was variation across the ethnicities when it came to satisfaction with work-life balance for female public servants. Māori (44.9%), Pacific (44.3%), and Other (47.0%) ethnicities had lower proportions of satisfaction than those not of those ethnicities. Women of Asian ethnicity reported the highest level of satisfaction (58.1%) while European and MELAA women had similar rates to those not of those ethnicities (50.1% for European, 51.2% for MELAA).

Similar proportions of female (49.8%) and male public servants (50.8%) said they had caring responsibilities, which could be caring for children of varying ages, older whānau/friends or looking after whānau/friends with a disability or long-term illness. Those women with caring responsibilities had a lower rate of satisfaction with work-life balance (46.3%) than those without them (54.0%) and this difference was slightly larger than for men.

This pattern was similar when looking across levels of management. However, the biggest difference in feelings of work life balance between female and male public servants with caring responsibilities was seen in senior management (Tiers 1 – 3). These women with caring responsibilities reported the lowest level of satisfaction with work-life balance (38.9%, compared to 55.9% of male Tiers 1 to 3) across any of the management types and lower than all non-management staff also.

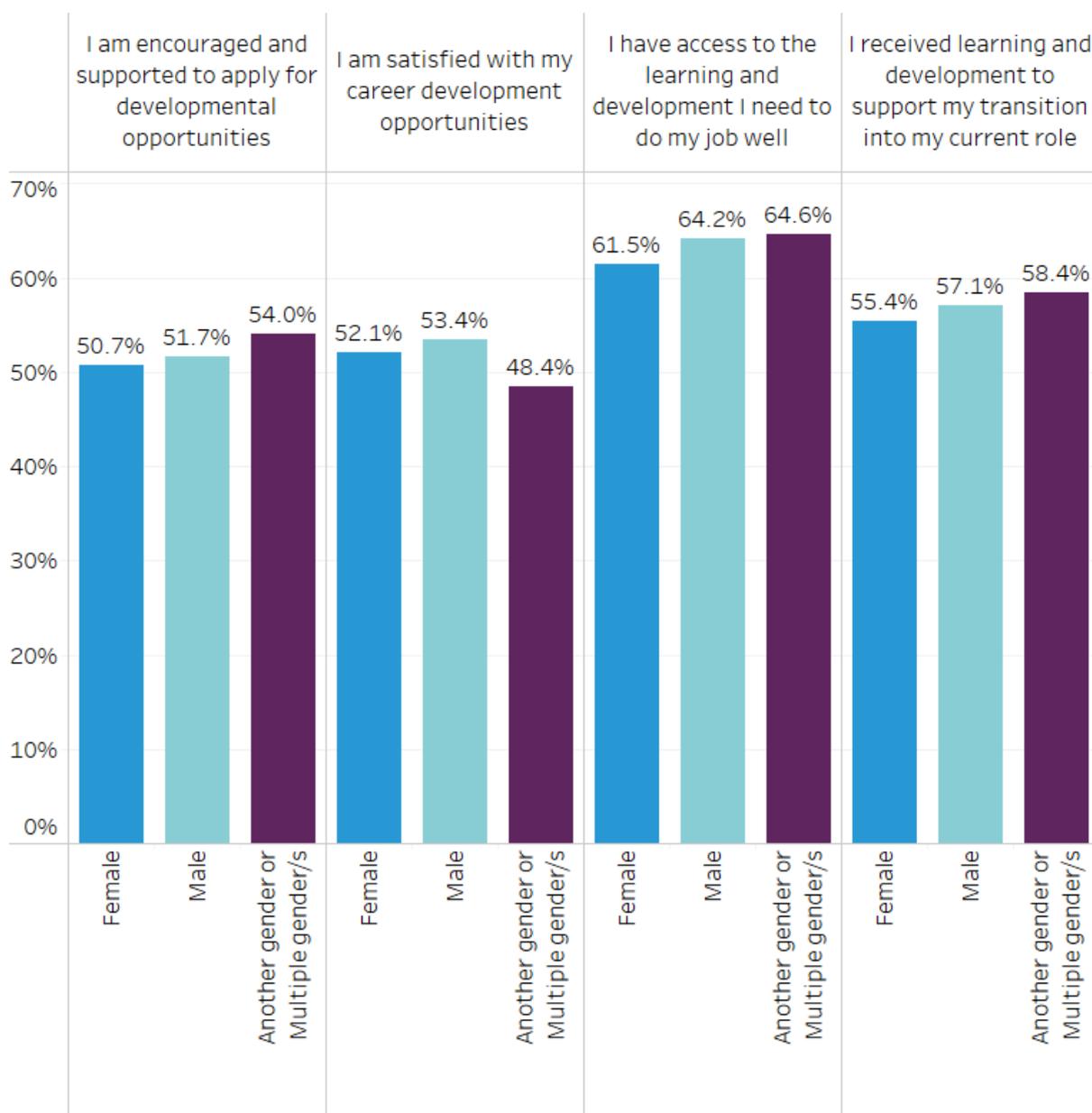
Of those women who reported caring responsibilities, 22.1% reported that it was easy or very easy to balance their responsibilities with their work, whereas 37.3% reported that it was difficult or very difficult to balance them. For both female and male public servants with caring responsibilities, those higher up in management were more likely to report it was difficult or very difficult to balance these with their work. Women in senior management (Tiers 1 to 3) reported the most difficulties in balancing caring responsibilities and work (45.2%).

Section Eight: Understanding women’s experiences – learning and development

Unless noted otherwise, this section uses data from Te Taunaki, as at May/June 2021

At least half of female public servants agreed with various positive statements around career development opportunities and learning, at slightly lower levels than for male public servants.

Figure 18: Agreement with learning and development questions by gender



Feelings towards learning and development opportunities did not vary much by region for female staff. Looking at access to the learning and development, there were some differences, ranging from lowest agreement in Wellington (58.9%) to the highest in Auckland (66.2%). Satisfaction with career development opportunities varied very little across the main regions, between 50.7% in Canterbury and 51.9% in Auckland and Waikato. The combined other regions were marginally more satisfied – 53.7%.

Differences in satisfaction with learning and development opportunities were also small when looked at by sexual identity. Lesbian and gay public servants felt they had the lowest access to learning and development (58.9%) while straight or heterosexual, and bisexual public servants had very similar levels (61.8%, and 61.9% respectively). Female public servants of other sexual identities had the lowest satisfaction with career development opportunities (50.0%) while those who were bisexual had the highest out of the different sexual identities (53.1%).

For disabled female public servants, their agreement that they have access to learning and development (52.9%) was lower than for non-disabled (62.0%) and this gap is slightly larger than the one between male disabled and non-disabled public servants. There was a similar difference in satisfaction with career development opportunities also – 44.9% of female public servants who were disabled were satisfied with these opportunities, compared to 52.5% of their non-disabled colleagues.

There was quite a lot of variation for female public servants across ethnic groups when it came to access to learning and development needed to do their job well:

- European (60.6%) and Other (51.1%) ethnicity female public servants reported lower levels of access than those not of those ethnicities (65.2% and 61.9% respectively)
- Māori (60.7%) and MELAA (59.6%) female public servants reported similar levels of access to those not of those ethnicities (62.0% and 61.8%)
- Pacific (65.7%) and Asian (67.5%) female public servants reported higher levels of access than their colleagues not of those ethnicities (61.4% and 61.0%)

Looking at levels of satisfaction with career development opportunities, female public servants who identified as European, Māori, Pacific, and Asian had very similar levels of satisfaction when compared to those not of those ethnicities. Those who identified as MELAA (45.8%) and Other (46.2%) ethnicities however had somewhat lower levels of satisfaction than those not of those ethnicities (52.6% non-MELAA and 52.6% also for non-Other).

Section Nine: Understanding women's experiences – joining and staying in the Public Service

Unless noted otherwise, this section uses data from Te Taunaki, as at May/June 2021

Joining the Public Service

The five most popular reasons given¹⁸ by female public servants for being initially attracted to working in the Public Service were:

- It's work that contributes positively to society (56.5%)
- It's interesting work (54.2%)
- The work is aligned with their job skills, experience or training (51.9%)
- It's work that helps people in their community (45.8%)
- There's job security (44.4%)

These were the same top five reasons given by male and another or multiple gender staff.

The same five reasons were reported consistently by female public servants across regions and ethnicities, although the ordering of these five and the levels of importance varied. For example, female Māori public servants were considerably more likely to place importance on work that helps people in their community (53.4% compared to 44.1% for non-Māori) and less likely to value work that is aligned to their skills, experience or training (42.4% compared to 54.1% for non-Māori).

By occupation, the reasons given by female public servants were mostly the same top five as those listed above, with some variations worth noting.

- Managers and Policy Analysts were the only occupations to have belief in the purpose and principles of the New Zealand Public Service feature in their top five, pushing job security out to the sixth position in both cases.

¹⁸ Respondents could select as many of the reasons as they felt were applicable.

- Job security is the number one reason for the lower paying occupations; Clerical and Administrative Workers, and Contact Centre Workers.
- Contact Centre Workers were one of only two occupations where work location was in the top five reasons (the other being Other Professionals not elsewhere included).

Staying in the Public Service

Female public servants placed importance on the same five reasons for staying in the Public Service as had attracted them to the Public Service in the first place, but in a slightly different order:

- It's interesting work (87.7%)
- It's work that contributes positively to society (86.9%)
- The work is aligned with their job skills, experience or training (82.2%)
- It's work that helps people in their community (80.5%)
- There's job security (80.1%)

These were the same top five as for the male public servants, but those of another or multiple genders rated the importance of an inclusive work environment in their top five reasons (with work aligned to their skills, experience or training dropping down).

By region, Wellington was the only main region that had quality of leadership and management and an inclusive work environment in the top five reasons to stay in the Public Service (job security dropped to eighth most important), although for Auckland and other regions, these two were the next most popular reasons.

While the top reasons were often similar across occupations, job security becomes more important the lower paying the occupation, with it not featuring in the top reasons for the three highest paying occupations (Managers, Policy Analysts, and Information Professionals).

By ethnicity, the same five reasons overall were rated highly by women across all groups, but there were some differences both in top five overall and in ordering. The quality of leadership and management was in the top 5 reasons for Māori, Pacific and Other ethnicities, while an inclusive work environment was in the top 5 for Asian women.

Open-ended comments from women in Te Taunaki

Te Taunaki gave respondents opportunity to identify what their ‘agency/department do to make you feel more comfortable about being yourself at work?’. In the open-ended comments, there were a range of ideas raised in barriers/suggestions for improving inclusion. Out of the 25,358 women who participated in Te Taunaki, 8,250 of them commented on this question. The section below is a summary of the most common themes in order of frequency.

Wanting more flexibility

Those who had access to flexible work wanted more, and those who didn’t have it wanted it. This included the ability to work from home more, have more flexible work hours (e.g. four 10-hour days, flex start/finish times). Lack of flexibility was sometimes seen as indicative of a low trust environment.

“Trust employees. Flexible working arrangements should not need to be earned nor should employees have to prove this. If someone is employed to do the job, they should be trusted to do it from whenever and wherever they choose so long as service is not impacted.”

“I need to recharge my wairua in a safe space and opt to work from home as much as I can. But the strain of having to be in the office all the time stops me from recharging myself and I burn out.”

“[Agency] are excellent employers. I love all they do for people. The one thing for myself would be the possibility of WFH one day a week.”

“Flexible working arrangements. There is a policy which promotes it but depends on the manager.”

“As a long term employee of the Public Service, I would like the opportunity to job share or have reduced hours as I approach retirement. This is not available to me in my current role”

Some people wanted the flexibility to work from other regions outside Wellington.

“We have flexible working from home conditions but I would also like the opportunity to work from another area outside Wellington (where I hope to live).”

Some people wanted more flexibility or agency in their work, including more flexibility in dress codes.

“Have more of an acceptance of casual clothes.”

Work pressures, stress, and lack of support

Stress and workload pressures were raised by both frontline and back-office staff.

“I have worked in [#] government departments over the last 15 years, and the common theme has been that the caseloads are always too high in order for front-line practitioners to deliver quality practice.”

“Although I only work 40 hours per week as required, it is not possible to do all of the work required of me well within those hours. This leads to a lot of stress, pressure, not meeting stakeholder expectations and pressure from management, and feeling inadequate. We are required to do more and more "accountability" reporting and upward reporting, without any consideration of the time these activities take in addition to core business work, and without any extra resourcing.”

“At times it can be highly stressful and a thankless job. When it is stressful it easily affects mental health. It is not easy to take time off due to be understaffed and operational requirements.”

Those who worked during the Covid period expressed how stressful it was.

“Many of us work long hours and miss time with our family as a result. We are expected to do multiple jobs and work excessive hours to do "more with less", I was working 60–70-hour weeks during lockdown while full time looking after a toddler to set up government initiatives.”

Ethnicity

Women raised the need for more employee-led networks, at both a regional level and for some groups, national level within their organisation.

“A number of Māori staff are looking for an opportunity to meet as Māori. However, we are constantly being told we cannot be exclusive and need to be open to our non Māori colleagues being part of these hui. Our difficulty is national hui are on offer for Māori staff. However, regionally this is not accepted.”

Wahine Māori are expected to provide cultural knowledge to their colleagues beyond their role, which can put them in an uncomfortable position.

“People will ask me questions about how to translate Māori kupu or how to act in a certain te ao Māori setting without considering that I am an urban Māori and am not an expert in tikanga Māori or fluent in te reo Māori (though I am working on that). I think the Ministry needs to provide more education around te ao Māori and what it means to be Māori today (in the sense that not everyone is fluent in te reo Māori or grew up on their marae/in their rohe).”

Some Pacific women have similar experiences.

“Be more supportive to Pacific staff who work with Pacific families because of their cultural expertise, knowledge and language over and above their caseload.”

There was a desire for more visible celebration of the broad range of cultures represented in the workplace.

“Celebrate cultural diversity more. There is a lack of celebration for the Pacific language weeks. I feel this needs to be improved.”

“Celebrating other cultures from around the world. What does it mean to be Scottish or Indian? Sharing stories about our cultures with our teams would be good.”

“Celebrating diversity including Korean culture and Christianity.”

Training needs

Comments about training were sometimes about what training they felt their organisation needed to provide for others, usually for people in management positions.

“Provide diversity and inclusion training for people managers so that they know and understand how to manage teams of diverse staff.”

“Train their managers to be more empathetic, flexible and be able to manage staff in a friendly manner rather than being so difficult to deal with and micromanaging staff which causes stress and anxiety in the office.”

Others commented about the need for other types of training, such as unconscious bias, Treaty, te reo, or tikanga.

“Some of my issues with feeling uncomfortable have to do with my upbringing and being denied certain aspects of my culture. If [agency] continues to support the education of te reo and tikanga it will definitely help, especially when those around you have a better understanding.”

“Educating people on their social biases especially towards Asians.”

For others, there was a need for training for their own development.

“Provide me with adequate training to do my job and not feel undervalued, leading me to not want to be at work.”

Discrimination

Comments relating to discrimination were most often about comments in the workplace, and systems/processes.

“Eradicate 'old' attitudes towards ethnicities that aren't white. Get rid of the 'it was just a joke' people, and the ones that bleat 'PC gone mad' when their racist, small-minded comments get challenged.” – wahine Māori

“They should have a better response to complaints of racism in the workplace. As a black person, the response to a complaint of racism I made has been woefully inadequate to the point where I am now leaving the organisation.” – MELAA woman

“Be supportive and culturally appropriate and aware of their staff. Not only is there gender inequality, there is a lot of cultural bias and unconscious racism I hear and feel all the time here.” – Pacific woman

“Actively address systemic racism and unconscious bias.” – Pacific woman

“I feel comfortable. As a pakeha I face no discriminations in my job. However, there is still definite underlying systemic racism and beliefs that I know make some of my colleagues who are not pakeha feel uncomfortable and disrespected.” – NZ European woman

Bullying

Although relatively few people said they were currently dealing with a bullying issue in their workplace, those who were felt deeply impacted by it. For some the processes that human resource teams used were frustrating.

“The subtle bullying is widespread and everyone seems to just accept it. Cultural sensitivity by some staff members towards Asian/migrant staff members is appalling. They make fun of our accents, food, black humour etc. We feel more accepted by our [customers/clients] than by some of the staff. We are branded as sensitive if we complain.” – Asian woman

“Please stop saying disingenuous things. When [agency] talks about things like ending racism, and addressing workplace bullying ... and then you find out nothing of substance really happens in this space, it feels like you're using issues really important to us to look good at our expense.” – wahine Māori

“Stop bullying staff and this comes from the top down.” – wahine Māori

“HR should stop enabling bad behaviour from bad managers ... They should not be allowed to get away with bullying or manipulation of staff and resources.” - ethnicity not stated

Positive working culture

There were also many comments from women who were loving their job in the Public Service.

“My experience at [organisation] has been very positive. I have a strong respect for and belief in the leaders of this organisation, who on the whole demonstrate integrity and high ethical standards.”

“Working for the government is hard work and sometimes stressful but it's rewarding. It's public service and I am feeling proud and happy that I am able to contribute to keeping the communities and New Zealand a safe place to live for my family and everyone.”

“I have been unwell for four months now and am slowly phasing back into work. [Agency] has been incredibly supportive of me during that time. It is my first experience of a long-term illness and knowing that I have the full support and backing of my employer has made a huge difference to my recovery.”

““Working in the Public Service is very rewarding and interesting. There is always a challenge to solve.”

“I have had very encouraging managers over the years who have supported me to move through different areas of work and move into management positions. The Public Service offers good opportunities for career development, reasonable rates of pay (in my case) and whilst

there may not be complete job security (I've been through a few restructures) the job security overall is very good. There's never a dull moment when you're working to service the public of New Zealand and a lot of job satisfaction.”

Māori Crown capability/skills

Participants in the survey were overwhelmingly supportive of growing Māori Crown capability within the Public Service.

“Increase availability of reo lessons to staff. Increase the use of te reo Māori in signage, material, day-to-day conversations and employment criteria.”

“Knowing and understanding te ao Māori and providing the right environment and mandate to be and practice Māori.”

“More support around learning Te Reo and allowing time to do this especially around your business as usual stuff.”

“Support staff to better understand colonisation and its impact on all peoples, especially themselves and including Māori. Support staff to understand the trauma that colonisation has on colonised peoples and the effects it has had and continues to have on Māori especially with the whanau we serve.”

Gender

Some women raised the challenges of progressing and getting recognised.

“Accept that women bring different attributes to leadership. This doesn't make them better or worse, just different. Need to get a more inclusive and diverse managers pool.”

“An aspect of my workplace that discomforts me relates to gender and my experience of observing that my male colleagues have a kind of systemic access to advantage that is not available to myself and my female colleagues. It feels like the way that men get access to opportunities and the associated remuneration is by being 'a good guy' whereas, the way that women may get access, if they're sufficiently humble and patient, is by being very intelligent and working very hard.”

Workplace language about and around women was a problem for some who commented.

“I feel there remains a strong sexist culture in our workplace which is difficult to identify as it is subtle.”

“I shouldn't have to act more like a man to be heard. My gender shouldn't play into the amount of respect I get. My work should.”

“Make sure that language around and about females is appropriate and not subtly undermining. Even if it's not directed at me, it still makes me uncomfortable hearing others talk about other women in ways that are unkind or sometimes even aggressive. I wouldn't say it's a widespread problem but it shouldn't be happening at all.”

Comments about trans/intersex/other genders are covered in the reporting for the Cross-Agency Rainbow Network, also published on the Te Kawa Mataaho website.

Parental or carer

Struggles of work/life balance with children were raised by many parents. Solo parents particularly are under pressure with competing demands.

“Acknowledge the pressures of being a working mum who strives to do her best for the people in her care (our clients), her team and her whanau and support, rather than criticise or judge when 'life happens' with respect to childcare.”

“More support for those who have children and need more flexibility during school holidays.”

“As a solo mum, I generally need more days off work due to sickness for my child and myself. I find it very disheartening when my [manager] has a meeting with me regarding sick days when I have provided medical certificates and am looking after a child on my own. I don't have the father to take 'half' the sick days off to help me out.”

“More accommodation for new mothers when they return to work. Having appropriate places to express milk. When I returned, I found it very stressful to try and continue feeding my child how I wanted when it was not set up at work. I felt uncomfortable and anxious for several months.”

“More permanent part time job availability for parents returning from maternity leave.”

“Provide a supportive child friendly environment when returning to work so mothers can continue to breastfeed their babies if they choose.”

Some people felt there were less options for career development if you are a parent.

“Have more senior technical women, especially ones who are parents. I feel like I've been held back by my gender as I had to take parental leave.”

“All women in senior leadership roles are childless or adult children and the work culture makes it difficult for women with young children to imagine being in those roles.”

“I am a single mother with a child with a chronic health disability. I am good at my job, however, have faced comments and detailed questions around when will my child be better and what will happen with [them] rather than being supportive of the family I have and the challenges that this presents. I have been made to feel that this makes me 'less' professional and opportunities have been limited.”

Other comments about working in the Public Service

There was also an opportunity in Te Taunaki to identify if there was ‘anything else about your experience of working for the New Zealand Public Service you would like to comment on?’. Out of the 25,358 women who participated in Te Taunaki, 7,752 of them commented on this question. The most common themes (that differ from those explored about inclusion above) are summarised below.

Pay

Remuneration, including policy decisions, low pay, and pay equity were the most common response from women to the question ‘Do you have any other comments about working in the Public Service?’

“Acknowledge the contribution that administration staff have to the workplace by paying them a fair wage.”

“Pay equity. Same pay for same jobs. ... People doing the same job in a different area are on much higher salary bands.”

“Transparency of salaries for the same role. I've found out recently that I'm on a lower salary band than those in equivalent positions who are male. I would like more transparency around this.”

The survey was launched just after the announcement on pay restraint in May 2021, so this was very much top of mind for respondents. Many expressed frustrations about the announcement in a period before they had detailed information about how it might impact them.

“I thought that we were doing important work to protect the NZ public during this pandemic (more important than at any other time in my career), but after hearing that a wage freeze was being proposed I feel that my contributions, as well as those of my colleagues also in Covid response roles, are just not valued. We seem to be viewed simply as ‘bureaucrats’.”

“The recent pay freeze was quite disappointing given I am early in my career so it creates uncertainty of my options for career progression and creates a worry that my earning potential will be capped if I stay at one agency for too long.”

Lack of recognition

There was a desire to be more valued and recognised by managers, agencies, the public and Government. The most common elements raised for improvement were pay and promotional opportunities.

“More recognition for the hard work and long hours that government employees are expected to do.”

“The public service in NZ is strong and delivers good outcomes for NZ. It’s made up of lot of very good people, predominantly women, who work extremely hard but are not recognised or paid sufficiently to reflect the work they do.”

“Regardless of how the NZ public view the Public Service, I think we are severely undervalued by our leadership and the Government - a great example being the current pay restraint on Public Servants.”

“The work of public servants is not well understood outside the public service and not widely valued - despite the hard work and value created. I was busy during Covid-19 but many public servants worked incredible hours under intense pressure without public recognition of their contribution. This was evident during Covid-19 lockdown but happens all of the time.”

“As a woman working part-time, I feel pretty marginalised and unseen - yet the agency I work in is hugely reliant on my skills and experience as well as my willingness to work extra hours over and above what I am

paid for. During my time at my agency, I have delivered excellent work and gone above and beyond in managing a big and challenging project, but there has been absolutely no financial or career-related reward during my time here, and there seems to be no avenue for me to develop further.”

Lack of development opportunities, including intersectional and location factors

Comments about career progression and development opportunities sometimes mentioned locations outside of the head office, and some intersectional factors, including age, ethnicity, and employment type (fixed term, part time).

Wellington/central office vs regions

Comments about location focussed on the challenges of progressing in a Public Service career outside the main centres, and particularly outside Wellington for those agencies with a limited regional footprint.

"I found it difficult to get other job opportunities early on as I found if you are not based at [national office] then you are not "seen" and other people are given opportunities before you."

"There is no career progression, particularly working in the "regions". Whilst the advent of technological changes has meant more opportunities opening up in the regions these are still rare and most often a person needs to move to Wellington in order to progress, then transfer back to the regions years down the line."

“From my experience as a fixed term employee - we really are treated as third class employees. At one point when I started, I was told I wasn't welcome to work in the Wellington office, I couldn't apply for any professional development training because it's all based in Wellington and we had no budget to dedicate to staff to learn or progress.”

“I have no career progression opportunities because I am based in a regional office and cannot relocate to Auckland, Wellington, or Christchurch.”

Age

Older female workers sometimes felt they did not get development or career progression opportunities.

“Despite having extensive experience I am never offered progression. I last had a progression discussion over 12 months ago. However, I get great performance reviews - what's wrong? I'm a woman who is older therefore I am invisible and not valued.”

“Despite applying for more advanced roles, always overlooked. I know I have the skills to perform in more advanced roles - however there appears to be a lot of favouritism looking like its who you know, not what you know. Very disappointing so I will die a [role] as too late in life to move into other employment - my mistake for not recognizing when I was younger.”

Younger female workers raised concerns about their career prospects, and lack of clarity on how progression works in the Public Service.

“In my current role, I believe there is not a lot of room for growth and development into other roles and no linear progression from here. It can feel like I am stuck but I also believe that the management plays a huge part in nurturing you as an employee in the right direction (which is not happening). I am still young so I do not want to be in my current role forever.”

Ethnic diversity

Wahine Māori expressed the critical role they play in their organisation, both within their normal job and in their secondary role as a holder of cultural knowledge. Still, they did not always feel that they were supported to grow their careers.

“I get asked to do a karanga or organise celebrations for Matariki. I get asked to play the guitar and sing a song when a visitor comes. Yet I still feel like I am the gum on someone's shoe when I get turned down for any opportunities.”

“I am a young Māori woman who has been employed with the [Agency] since I was [early 20s] years old and work in an office of approx. 60-80 people. As it is well known, majority of the people who [are our clients/customers], yet I see not many others like me. Young, brown with cultural experience. I have spent six years of my career in the [Agency] as a [role] and have never been offered a secondment or development opportunities and have been turned down for the several internal jobs I have applied for.”

“The lack of opportunity for progression as a Māori is concerning, especially when it is proven that Māori working with Māori is for the best.”

“By holding staff back from rising through the ranks yet continuing to use them to mentor and prime other staff to rise through the ranks.”

“I also believe Māori women aren't valued by the current leadership and this is reflected in the promotion of men into key leadership roles and the demotion or exit of Māori women from key leadership roles. It doesn't give Māori women at my level the confidence that there is room for us to be promoted or recognised for our leadership abilities.”

In Te Taunaki, there were very few comments from Pacific women about lack of career opportunities. Asian women had more comments.

“There needs to be more career development opportunities, I have been in my role for a year, and I have not received any, even after asking for it three times.” – Asian woman

“Good development but very little career progression. Often colleagues will have to join a different team or agency to progress.” – Asian woman

There were also comments from people who felt they had less opportunity because they were not part of a diverse group.

“Little opportunities to develop, unless you are Māori or Pacific Islander.”

Internal promotion processes

Based on the comments, it appears some but not all agencies have formal processes for internal promotion without requiring a specific vacancy. Those working in agencies that don't have these promotion processes find the need to change jobs to progress a point of frustration, and a risk to their agency in loss of institutional knowledge.

“Career progression and learning and development opportunities at [Agency] are non-existent. You have to change roles to progress.”

“Career progression is very limited within existing jobs - e.g., cannot progress in role (e.g., [entry level role] to senior [role]) without having to apply and compete with external applicants.”

“Advisors or juniors continue to be looked over for senior roles, with agencies typically valuing applicants from other agencies. Many advisors have been performing at a senior level for a number of years. Loyalty to

an organisation or team is not seen as beneficial and in my view managers and HR pass them over in what I can only assume is an assumption that they will stay and continue to work at a senior level for a junior pay rate. This means many of our excellent team members move to other agencies in order to get a promotion (which is much easier) and with them take years of institutional and programme based knowledge.”

“I have really worked hard to get to where I am, but after applying for roles within the organisation to better use my skills, I have been rejected far too often with no feedback, only because someone in the leadership role has shoulder tapped a "favourite" staff and put them in a secondment role and then advertise the role just to follow process ... to show that a number of candidates were interviewed but no suitable candidate was found, and hence the role was given to their favourite staff who was already seconded and doing the role. It leaves a very poor impression and demotivated good people, hence so many people leave.”

"Working for the public service is a real honour for someone like me who has no educational background besides secondary school qualifications. ... I feel career development lacks in the public sector. I see many who work tirelessly however are never acknowledged or given that opportunity to go to the next level of the job. Many aren't given the confidence to get out of their comfort zones to move up the ladder. However, then you have some who are lucky enough to ""know"" the right people at the higher levels. An issue I see is that ""It's who you know not what you know"" when it comes to trying to go up a level."

Restructures

Comments about restructures within organisations were negative.

“The public service is full of committed individuals who want to make a positive contribution to society but suffer from waves of restructuring and lurches in strategy that do not deliver results.”

"That restructures happen from a top-down perspective without fully understanding or acting on the feedback of frontline staff who have to actually do the mahi..."

"There seems to be constant ""re-structuring"" happening left and right in the two government agencies I've worked for so far. There is a great focus on advocating mental wellness in both jobs, but the ""re-structuring or organising"" activity often times, creates chaos from confusion [and a] feeling of uncertainty, that leads to demotivation.”

“Ongoing uncertainty caused by long drawn out business transformation/restructure signalling job losses - this has impacted negatively on positivity and productivity in my workplace.”

Conclusion and next steps

The Public Service has had a dedicated diversity and inclusion programme in place since 2017. Significant progress has been made across the system, with the Public Service more diverse now than ever before. With strong leadership commitment to ensuring diversity and inclusion across the system, agencies are more focused and connected as they plan and deliver a range of diversity and inclusion initiatives at pace.

The data we have tells us that the diversity of the Public Service workforce is increasing, and most public servants feel included in their workplace. But alongside this, it also shows that people from some communities within our workforce, do not. This cannot be overlooked. With a strong system foundation in place, we are well positioned to place collective focus on inclusion for public servants from these communities.

A range of work programmes are underway. Papa Pounamu continues to evolve and embed five focus areas to guide Public Service agencies towards further progress on diversity and inclusion. This programme of work is aligned to other key work programmes such as the Positive Workplace Cultures programme and Kia Toipoto, the pay gap action plan.

Te Kawa Mataaho also continues to work in partnership with agencies to increase the quality of the data collected and our employee-led networks to help understand it. High quality data and insights are critical to understanding public servants and their experiences, where progress is being made and where our collective focus should be. Papa Pounamu continues to develop its work programme based on Te Taunaki and deep dive data and insights (and new insights as they arise) and is committed to supporting agencies to collect and understand their workforce data and to planning and delivering initiatives to effect change.

Te Taunaki 2024 will give us more data and insights and enables us to measure the progress we make.

For more information:

- [Papa Pounamu priority areas](#)
- [Te Taunaki Public Service Census 2021](#)
- [Te Taunaki Public Service Census: Inclusion deep dive](#)
- [Workforce data](#)
- [Government Women's Network](#)
- [Employee Led Networks](#)
- [Kia Toipoto](#)
- [Pay equity](#)