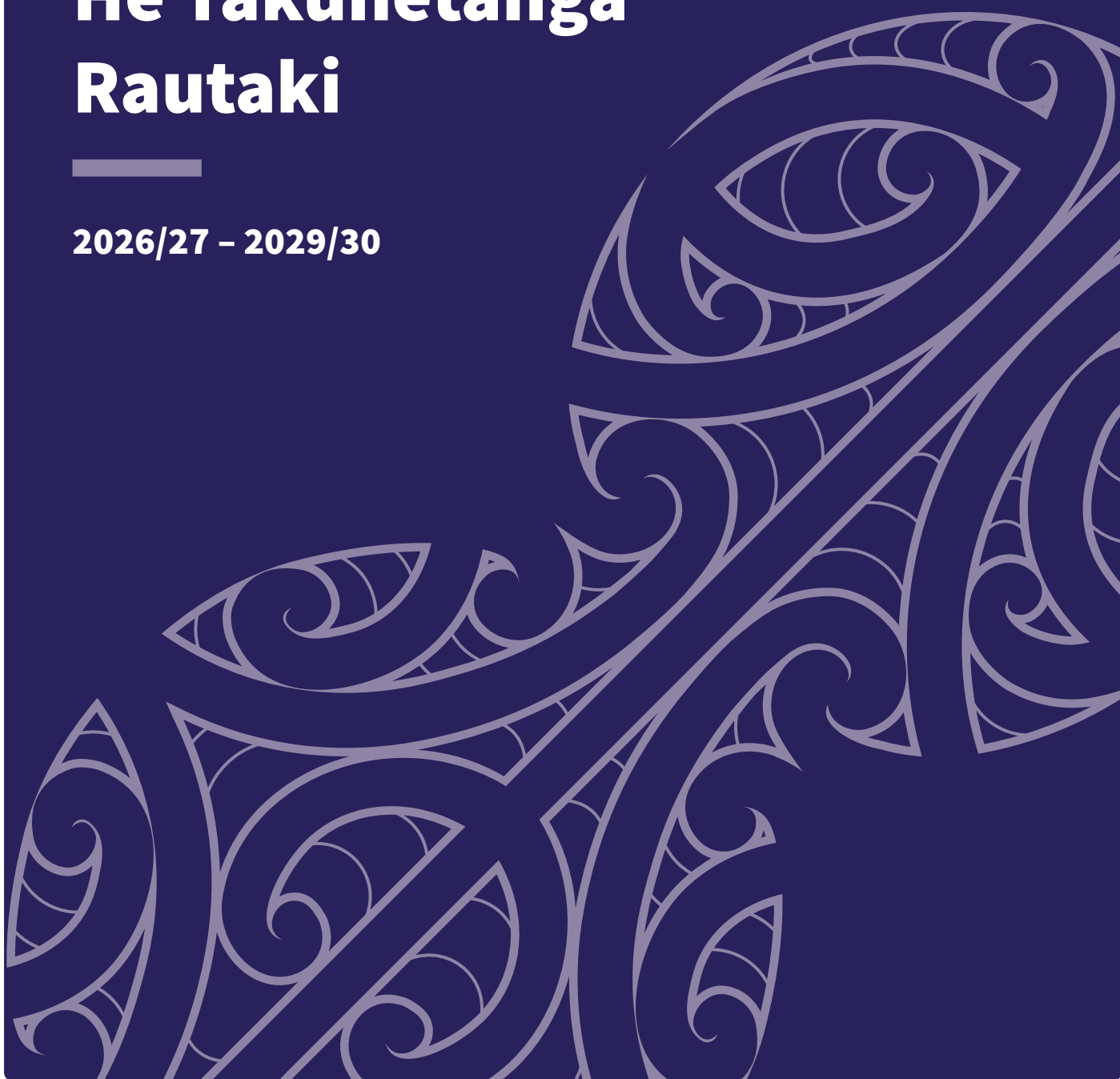




Public Service Commission
Te Kawa Mataaho

Strategic Intentions He Takunetanga Rautaki

2026/27 – 2029/30





Presented to the House of Representatives
pursuant to Section 39 of the Public Finance Act 1989

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Chief Executive and Minister's Statements | Ngā Tauākī a te Tumu Whakarae me te Minita

In signing this information, I acknowledge that I am responsible for the information on strategic intentions for the Public Service Commission Te Kawa Mataaho. This information has been prepared in accordance with section 38 and section 40 of the Public Finance Act 1989.



Sir Brian Roche KNZM

Public Service Commissioner

Dated: 30 September 2026

I am satisfied that the information on strategic intentions prepared by the Public Service Commission Te Kawa Mataaho is consistent with the policies and performance expectations of the Government.



Hon Paul Goldsmith

Minister for the Public Service and Digitising Government

Dated: 30 September 2026

Introduction | Te kupu whakataki

The Public Service Commission Te Kawa Mataaho (the Commission) leads the Public Service and supports agencies to work together to improve services and outcomes for New Zealand and its people.

New Zealanders expect public services that are effective, accessible and trusted, and government agencies that exercise public power lawfully, uphold democratic values and human rights, respect the Treaty of Waitangi, and contribute to a cohesive society.

Strong system leadership enables the Public Service to act as one system and focus on what matters most.

The Commission is required under the Public Finance Act 1989 to review its strategic intentions every three years. This document reflects the establishment of the Government Digital Delivery Agency within the Commission.

This version takes effect from 1 October 2026.

Our strategic direction | Tō mātou ahunga rautaki

Our vision is for a leading edge, unified, trusted Public Service that serves New Zealand and its people. To deliver on this vision, we will lead the Public Service to:

- **Improve public services and achieve better outcomes for New Zealanders:** a Public Service that is committed to bringing real tangible improvements in the lives of individuals, whānau, and communities – and public services organised around New Zealanders' needs.
- **Protect and strengthen the foundations of public trust and legitimacy:** a Public Service that acts constitutionally and ethically, maintaining its democratic and constitutional heritage, legitimacy and the public's trust, grounded in a spirit of service to the community.

We will strengthen Public Service capability and coordinate change to ensure that the Public Service continues to be unified around its principles and values and works as a single system in the service of New Zealand and the public.

Our strategic context

The Public Service has strong foundations with high levels of integrity and trust, and a commitment to serving New Zealand and its people. It consistently ranks highly in international indices for integrity, trust, and governance and public administration.¹ In June 2026, 80% of New Zealanders trusted the government service they most recently used (similar to the result for satisfaction with the service they most recently used), and 60% of New Zealanders trusted the Public Service (compared to 46% for the private sector).²

However, there remain opportunities to improve the operation of the Public Service for the future, reducing fragmentation and better integrating services around New Zealanders. Performance is constrained by slow adoption of digital technology and artificial intelligence, fiscal pressures, uneven capability and limited talent development. Duplication and inconsistent approaches to technology investment, leadership and workforce practices, limit efficiency and the benefits of interoperability and scale. This makes it harder to adapt to changing needs and deliver services that are easy for people and businesses to navigate.

Transforming the Public Service

The Public Service needs to move from fragmented ways of working to a more coordinated, coherent, outcome-focused and centrally led model. The goal is a high-performing Public Service that is more effective, capable, sustainable and productive while strengthening public trust and legitimacy. Achieving this will require changes to structures, processes and ways of working.

¹ Blavatnik Index of Public Administration: <https://index.bsg.ox.ac.uk/>; OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions: https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/oecd-survey-on-drivers-of-trust-in-public-institutions-2026-results_9eb63fec-en.html

² Kiwis Count: <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/data/kiwis-count>

Agencies, functions and services need to be organised around outcomes and user needs with more strategic management of resources, leadership, capability and digital investment. Digital, data and emerging technologies need to become core enablers of performance and decision-making.

We will work with other central agencies to coordinate change. Success will rely on sustained commitment from Ministers, chief executives and agencies and stronger alignment of investment, capability and organisational decisions with system priorities. This will improve long-term performance and help position the Public Service for the future.

To deliver on this, the Commission will focus on three connected priorities:

Aligning and consolidating the Public Service

The Commission will strengthen its stewardship role by advising on organisational arrangements that better align the Public Service with Government priorities. This includes improving coordination, reducing duplication, focusing resources on areas of greatest impact, and designing services around outcomes and user needs.

We will draw on performance information, agency reviews and system evidence, consider the costs, benefits and risks of change, and support agencies to maintain service continuity during transitions.

The goal is a more effective, efficient and adaptable Public Service that is easier to navigate, delivers Government priorities, and maintains public trust.

Using digital to improve Public Service performance

Digital technology, data and artificial intelligence (AI) can improve service delivery, decision-making and productivity across the Public Service. The focus is on improving performance and outcomes, not technology for its own sake.

The Commission will strengthen leadership through the Government Digital Delivery Agency, and promote more coordinated approaches to digital investment, capability and delivery. Greater use of common platforms, standards and capabilities will improve value for money while strengthening key digital foundations such as digital identity.

The goal is a more productive, efficient and responsive Public Service, which has a digitally confident and capable workforce using digital, data and AI safely and responsibly.

Improving Public Service leadership and capability

The Public Service relies on capable, ethical and future-focused leaders, supported by a skilled workforce committed to serving New Zealanders. The Commission will take a more strategic approach to improving leadership and capability, with support for, and more coordinated investment in, leadership development, succession planning and workforce mobility.

Talent will be actively identified and developed across all career stages, to develop a pipeline of future leaders, and an adaptable workforce that can be moved to the areas of greatest need and impact.

The goal is a more capable and adaptable Public Service, that attracts, develops and retains talented people, to deliver Government priorities and sustain long-term performance.

Our work | Ā mātou mahi

To achieve a high-performing system, our work will span five connected areas:

System design

The Commission will advise Ministers on opportunities to consolidate, rationalise and simplify Public Service organisational arrangements. Where change is agreed, we will support implementation and help maintain service continuity.

Working with the Treasury and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, we will align organisational design, investment and delivery settings to support Government priorities. Our advice will focus on improving decision-making and reducing duplication so that resources are directed to the areas of greatest impact.

Through the Government Digital Delivery Agency, we will strengthen oversight of digital services, systems and funding settings to ensure they are designed around users and outcomes, and are using common standards, platforms and investment choices. We will also support system leads and heads of profession to improve interoperability and alignment across common functions.

Performance

The Commission will support clear and measurable performance expectations at all-of-government and portfolio levels, and work with central agencies to provide coordinated advice, oversight and assurance of agency and chief executive performance to Ministers.

We will undertake agency reviews to assess alignment with Government priorities and identify opportunities to improve capability, delivery and value for money. Findings will inform advice, and targeted interventions tailored to agency need and context.

We will promote productivity and fiscal sustainability and use performance information to identify risks and opportunities for improvement. This includes supporting agencies to manage within constrained resources and direct investment to areas of greatest impact.

Through the Government Digital Delivery Agency, we will accelerate adoption of shared digital capabilities, platforms and reusable services. Strategic commercial arrangements and partnerships will be used where they can improve value for money, efficiency, system capability and service delivery.

Leadership

The Commission will continue to appoint and support Public Service chief executives and hold them accountable for their contribution to agency and system performance. With and through the Public Service Leadership Team we will strengthen stewardship and performance, and ensure agencies work more effectively together to deliver Government priorities.

We will build leadership capability and succession planning through development opportunities, mobility, and talent management. We will actively identify and develop future leaders and enable them to move across the system to where they are needed most.

Digital transformation will be a system priority. Chief executives will be expected to support the delivery of system-wide digital transformation, and the responsible adoption of digital technologies and AI, including changes to how services are designed and work is organised.

Through the Government Digital Delivery Agency, we will strengthen leadership, governance, assurance and accountability for digital transformation. We will hold agencies to account for delivering projects and programmes, and reset the system risk appetite, funding models and oversight arrangements. This will help break down the barriers that prevent digital change from proceeding at pace. To achieve this, the Government Digital Delivery Agency will need to become a highly capable central strategic unit, technical authority and commercial broker for the system.

We will also support Regional Public Service Commissioners to strengthen community engagement and improve the connections between national priorities and local delivery.

Workforce

The Commission will help agencies identify, attract, develop, deploy and retain the talent and capability needed to meet current and future challenges. We will support agencies to identify and develop talent at all career stages and cultivate pathways for people to build careers across the Public Service.

Through the Leadership Development Centre and other partnerships, we will support development of capability in priority areas, including leadership, integrity, digital, data, AI and supporting the Māori Crown relationship. We will also support greater workforce mobility, to strengthen capability, retain expertise, reduce competition for talent and respond to changing priorities.

We will set system expectations for workforce management, advise Ministers on workforce policy and support greater alignment of pay and terms and conditions. We will oversee collective employment agreement negotiations. We will use workforce data to provide assurance to Ministers and assess how workforce choices affect capability, productivity and fiscal sustainability.

Culture

The Commission will promote high standards of integrity, conduct and constitutional understanding across the Public Service, to ensure that the Public Service maintains the trust and confidence of the public and of current and future governments.

We will support and guide agencies to improve integrity capability and practice, including managing interests, protecting decision-making from undue influence and maintaining safe channels for speaking up. We will also support agencies to foster cultures of learning, innovation and adaptation, and the responsible use of digital, data and AI.

We will investigate matters within the Commissioner's integrity mandate to address ethical breaches and monitor agency performance under the Official Information Act and the Government's policies on proactive release.

Our vision for the Public Service

A leading-edge, unified and trusted Public Service that serves New Zealand and its people

Improves public services and supports better outcomes for New Zealanders

Protects and strengthens the foundations of public trust and legitimacy

Improves outcomes for New Zealand

Delivers better services for New Zealanders

Supports democratic government and active citizenship

Acts constitutionally and ethically

Modern, agile and adaptive

Unified by a common mission and ethos

Highly skilled, capable and productive

Engaged with and responsive to the communities we serve

Clear on and committed to our constitutional role

Supports the Māori Crown relationship

Prepared to meet future challenges



Align and consolidate the Public Service

- The Public Service is intentionally designed to deliver Government priorities effectively, efficiently and sustainably
- Agencies, functions and services have clear roles and accountabilities, are organised around outcomes and user need, and operate cohesively across organisational boundaries
- Services are easier for people and businesses to navigate, and the system can adapt more quickly to changing priorities and needs
- Performance information and data support a clear view of service delivery, expectations, decisions and interventions



Use digital to improve Public Service performance

- Agency digital transformation strategies and actions enable modern and effective public services, with safe and effective use of digital, data and AI
- Digital investments are coordinated, prioritised and aligned at system level, driving better value for money
- Common platforms, architecture and standards make digital services more consistent for people and businesses
- Shared platforms, system assets and AI reduce duplication simplify the government's digital footprint and make services more resilient and secure
- Public servants are highly capable, confident, responsible and productive users of digital, data and AI



Improve Public Service leadership and capability

- The Public Service is recognised for attracting, developing and retaining talented people who are inspired to make a difference
- Leadership is strong and actively managed, with clear succession pathways and a consistent focus on performance and capability supports a productive and adaptable Public Service
- System workforce capability is well aligned to current and emerging needs, and people and skills can move to the areas of greatest need and impact
- Public servants are trustworthy, maintaining the standards of conduct and behaviour that New Zealanders expect
- Agency cultures, processes and incentives support improvement, innovation and considered risk-taking

System design

- The number of government departments is reduced by consolidating, rationalising and simplifying their organisational structures
- Organisational structures support good decision-making, reduce unnecessary duplication and enable resources to be directed to the areas of greatest impact
- Digital services, systems and funding settings are designed around users and outcomes, using common standards, platforms and investment choices
- System leads have tools to support them in driving efficiency, interoperability and alignment across common functions

Performance

- Measurable objectives at the portfolio and all-of-government level are emphasised in agency and chief executive performance expectations
- There is a sustained focus across agencies on fiscal discipline and sustainability
- Accelerated adoption of shared digital capabilities, secure platforms and reusable services improves productivity and resilience
- An ongoing programme of agency reviews drives alignment with Government priorities and supports improvement
- Effective interventions support agency performance, tailored to their context

Leadership

- Chief executives work collectively to deliver better services and lift performance
- Leadership pipelines are cultivated through development opportunities, mobility and talent management
- System-wide digital transformation is a leadership performance priority
- Wider spans of control and fewer layers of management empower leaders and teams
- Regional Public Service Commissioners are leveraged to improve engagement with communities and alignment of services

Workforce

- System workforce and employment relations expectations are clear
- Workforce choices consider long-term capability requirements, productivity and value for money alongside operational need
- Investment in developing capability is deliberate, coordinated and sustained
- Talent is actively identified and developed at all career stages
- The size and composition of the workforce is actively monitored
- Pay, terms and conditions are increasingly aligned across the Public Service

Culture

- There is clear and unified adoption of shared standards of behaviour at all levels
- Agencies are given support and guidance to continuously improve integrity in practice
- Openness, transparency and access to information is promoted
- Agencies adopt a culture of learning, innovation and adaptation
- Decision-making is protected from undue influences
- There are safe channels for public servants to speak up about wrongdoing
- Decisive action is taken to address ethical breaches

Treaty of Waitangi | Te Tiriti o Waitangi is an integral part of New Zealand's constitutional framework. The Public Service supports the Crown in its relationship with Māori under the Treaty.

The **Public Service Act 2020** underpins each of the key areas of our work programme

The **Public Finance Act 1989** and **Crown Entities Act 2004** complement the Public Service Act as the foundational legislation for our Public Service

Measuring progress

This table contains indicators the Commission uses to track the impact of its work, based on our vision on the previous page. They are drawn from a range of sources, including surveys of the public (through the Commission’s regular ‘Kiwis Count’ survey), public servants (through the Public Service Census) and ministers (through satisfaction surveys); as well as direct measures of agency performance. Survey questions/measures change from time to time. The table includes information about the outcomes the indicators are tracking and the trend we hope to see as a result of our efforts.

Outcome	Focus	Indicator	Source / Lead	Frequency	Desired Trend
Improves public services and supports better outcomes for New Zealanders	Better services for customers, clients and citizens	Public perception that the public service understands and works with other government organisations to meet their needs; is there when needed; and does its best to help New Zealanders	Kiwis Count	Quarterly	↗
		Satisfaction with most recent service experience	Kiwis Count	Quarterly	↗
		Satisfaction with most recent <u>digital</u> service experience (e.g. via website, app or kiosk)	Kiwis Count	Quarterly	↗
Improves outcomes for New Zealand		Digital accessibility quality of public-facing government digital web services	Centralised Web Accessibility Checker (CWAC)	Quarterly	↗
	Better services for business	Business experience when dealing with government (the quantity and quality of overall customer experiences for businesses when dealing with government or complying with government requirements)	MBIE Annual Report	Annual	↗
Delivers better services for New Zealanders	Better outcomes	Various domain-specific outcome measures collected and reported by agencies	Agency annual reports	Annual	↗
		Progress against Government targets and priorities	DPMC reporting	Quarterly	↗
	Organisational arrangements	Number of public service departments	Public Service Commission	Annual	↗
Modern, agile and adaptive	Workforce size and composition	Public Service workforce size and composition reflects government expectations, including appropriate use of external resource (contractors and consultants)	Public Service Commission workforce data	Quarterly	↗
	Digital delivery	Public service organisations take advantage of technology to deliver better services/information to the public	Public Service Census	Two-yearly	↗
	Digital investment	Major agency digital investments are aligned with government wide digital investment priorities (goal: 100% alignment)	GDDA, Digital Investment Alignment Rating	Annual	↗

Outcome	Focus	Indicator	Source / Lead	Frequency	Desired Trend
Highly skilled, capable and productive	Leadership capability	At least 90% of people who have been in the Executive Talent Cohort programme for six months or more are actively developing their leadership capability through an agreed development plan	Public Service Commission	Annual	↑
	Public servant perception of skills	Public servants consider that they have the skills necessary for the work that they do / more demanding work	Public Service Census	Two-yearly	↑
		Public servants feel confident in their ability to learn new digital skills	Public Service Census	Two-yearly	↑
		The proportion of public servants who use AI (Artificial Intelligence) regularly for work	Public Service Census / agency data	Two-yearly	↑
	Public servant perception of innovation	Public servants agree that people in their team are encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things, and suggestions to improve workplace efficiency or productivity are taken seriously and acted upon	Public Service Census	Two-yearly	↑
Protects and strengthens the foundations of public trust and legitimacy	Policy quality	Ministerial satisfaction with quality of policy advice received from agencies	Agency annual reports	Annual	↑ or ↓
	Public service craft	Public Service learning assets are updated on the Public Service Core Learning Hub, including Core Capability	Public Service Commission	Annual	↑
	Public trust and confidence	Public trust based on people's most recent experience of the public service	Kiwis Count	Quarterly	↑
		Public trust in the public service	Kiwis Count	Quarterly	↑
	NZ performance in cross-jurisdictional studies	New Zealand maintains or improves its country ranking in key cross-jurisdictional studies, such as the Corruption Perception Index and OECD Trust Survey	Transparency International, OECD	Annual	↑ or ↓
Supports democratic government and active citizenship	Transparency and OIA performance	OIA reporting undertaken covering: the number of requests completed by the number and proportion of these requests where legislative timeliness requirements were met, the number of responses proactively published on an agency's website, OIA complaints to the Ombudsman that were notified to the agency, final views issued by the Ombudsman where a deficiency was identified	Public Service Commission OIA and proactive release statistics	Six monthly	↑
		Public perception that public service agencies are open and transparent with information	Kiwis Count	Quarterly	↑ or ↓
	Proactive release	Proportion of Cabinet papers proactively released in line with Cabinet policy, and proportion of OIA responses proactively released	Public Service Commission OIA and proactive release statistics	Six monthly	↑ or ↓

Outcome	Focus	Indicator	Source / Lead	Frequency	Desired Trend
Prepared to meet future challenges	Responsiveness	Public perception that public service agencies change services in response to feedback	Kiwis Count	Quarterly	↑ or ↑
	Long-term insights briefing	DPMC completes a long-term insights briefing (as required by the Public Service Act), and progresses long-term policy options identified in the briefing	DPMC	Three-yearly	↑
	Focus on long-term good	Public servants consider that their organisation is working for the long-term good of New Zealand	Public Service Census	Two-yearly	↑ or ↑
	Adherence to public service principles	Public servants have a good understanding of what it means to be a politically neutral public servant; are confident that in their organisations people get jobs based on merit; and are confident that their organisations are free and frank in their advice to ministers	Public Service Census	Two-yearly	↑
Acts constitutionally and ethically	Ethical behaviour	Public perception that the public service is generally honest; treats people fairly and with respect; and admits responsibility when it makes mistakes	Kiwis Count	Quarterly	↑
Clear on and committed to our constitutional role	Spirit of service celebrated	Te Hāpai Hapori the Spirit of Service Awards recognise public servants and initiatives that exemplify the spirit of service and demonstrate an outstanding commitment to New Zealand	Public Service Commission	Annual	↑
Unified by a common mission and ethos	Spirit of service ethos and culture	Views on spirit of service expressed by public servants (public servants joining to make a positive contribution to society or help community, being motivated by their work contributing to the common good)	Public Service Census	Two-yearly	↑ or ↑
	Policies and systems	Guidance and support on public service principles and values is provided to agencies	Public Service Commission	Annual	↑
	Respectful workplaces	Gather public servant perceptions and experiences of respectful workplaces and unacceptable behaviours to inform actions	Public Service Census	Two-yearly	↑
Supports the Māori Crown relationship	Understanding / knowledge	The degree of confidence public servants have in their understanding of their agency's Treaty responsibilities	Public Service Census	Two-yearly	↑
	Engagement and understanding	Public servants reporting they are encouraged and supported to engage with Māori to ensure Māori views and perspectives are taken into account	Public Service Census	Two-yearly	↑

Role of Public Service Commission Te Kawa Mataaho | Tā te Kawa Mataaho kawenga

The Commission's purpose is to lead the Public Service to perform for New Zealand.

We will take a position when required, we will back public servants, and we will protect the integrity of the Public Service. We will ensure that the system is focused on delivering the services that New Zealanders want, need and expect.

Leading the system

The Public Service Commissioner is the Head of Service. They provide leadership and oversight to the Public Service, and wider public sector agencies, to ensure they work as one system. The Commissioner also acts to protect and enhance the legitimacy of, and trust in, the Public Service, ensuring it achieves its purpose and has the spirit of service at its heart.

Our statutory role

The Public Service Act 2020 provides the Commissioner with the mandate, powers, and levers to lead and oversee the Public Service. The Commissioner's influence is strongest within the Public Service, where they are the employer of department and departmental agency chief executives. Some responsibilities, including integrity, extend across parts of the wider public sector.

Under the Act, the Commissioner's functions include:

- leading the Public Service to improve services and outcomes for New Zealanders
- promoting Public Service integrity and good conduct, accountability and transparency, including through standards and guidance
- appointing, employing and reviewing the performance of department and departmental agency chief executives
- developing senior leadership and management capability in the Public Service, working with departmental chief executives
- promoting workforce capability, capacity, and employment relations capability
- advising on improvements to the design and operation of government agencies
- reviewing agency performance, supporting improvement, and conducting investigations and inquiries.

A high-performing and sustainable organisation

We will maintain a strong and sustainable organisation with the people, leadership, systems, information and organisational capability required to deliver our statutory responsibilities and strategic priorities. We will continue to strengthen how we organise and deliver our work, ensuring that our resources, services and capabilities support effective decision-making, high-quality delivery and long-term stewardship of the Public Service system.





New Zealand Government
Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa

