Regional Movement of Public Service workforce

Date:	**7 July 2023**		
To:	**Hon Andrew Little, Minister for the Public Service**		
Report No:	2023-0200		
Contact:	**Josh Masson, Chief Data Officer, Strategy and Policy,** 9(2)(a) privacy		
Encl:	No	**Priority:**	Low
Security Level:	**UNCLASSIFIED**		

Executive Summary

1. You have sought a briefing on regional movement of the Public Service workforce. This briefing includes information on public service departments and departmental agencies, as at 30 June 2022. We are currently in the process of collecting information for 2023.

2. In June 2022, 44.7% of the Public Service was located in the Wellington region. This was a slight reduction from 2021, however there is a long-term trend of an increase in this proportion from 38.9% in 2000. A similar but lesser trend has been seen in Auckland. This is demonstrated in Figure 1.

3. Analysis of this movement by occupational groups (possible since 2007) indicates that the Information Professionals occupation group has contributed the most to Wellington growth with over 4,000 new roles in this area since 2007. Information professionals include such roles as data, business and intelligence analysts, service design, non-policy advisors, librarians, project managers and governance roles. There are also an additional 435 ICT professionals.

4. This growth indicates an adjustment towards the larger urban centres is the result of work to design and support digital services. As services have moved to digital platforms this has also led to a corresponding reduction in regional clerical and administrative staff.

5. Alongside this structural change, since 2007 there has also been an increase in frontline roles in the Wellington region, including 673 new social, health or education professionals, and 392 new inspector and regulatory officers. This is a result of investment in services required to match population growth over this period.

Recommended Action

We recommend that you:

a **note** the contents of this briefing.

Noted.

b **agree** that Te Kawa Mataaho release this briefing in full once it has been considered by you.

Agree/disagree.

Hon Andrew Little
Minister for the Public Service

Regional Movement of Public Service workforce

Purpose of Report

6. At Select Committee on 21 June, there was discussion on the growth in numbers of public servants working in Wellington.

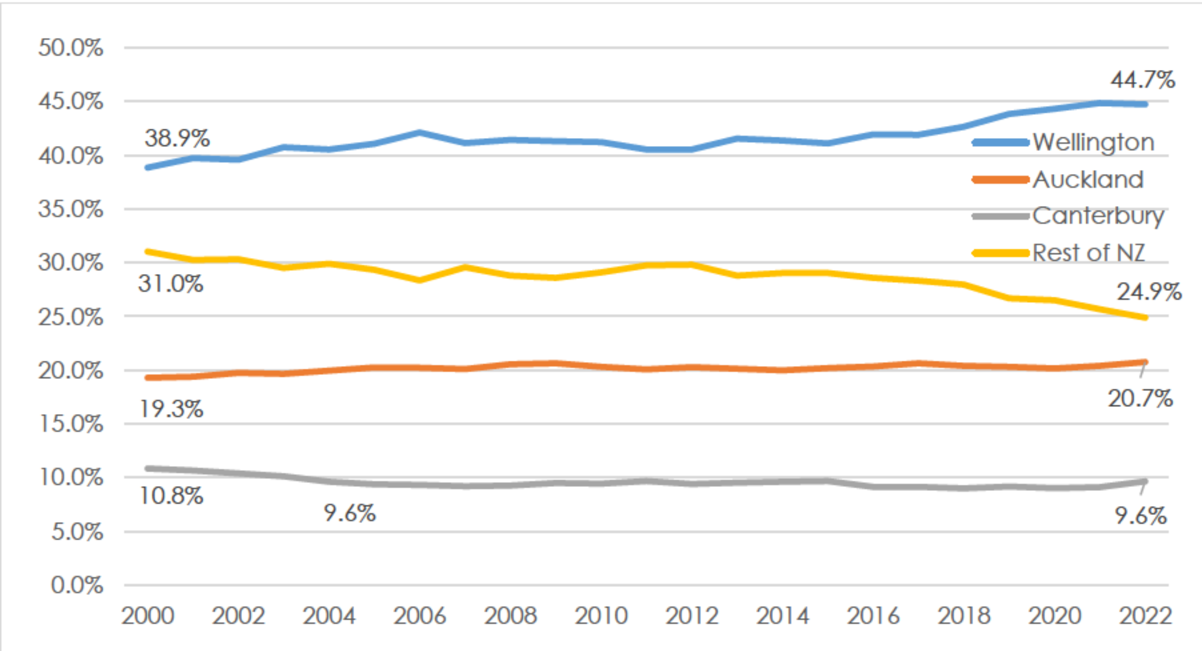
7. This report provides you with analysis on regional movements of public servants with a particular focus on growth in Wellington. Our analysis covers public servants employed by public service departments and departmental agencies only.

Analysis:

Proportional breakdown in regional public servants

8. Since 2000 there has been a slow and consistent shift in public service personnel to Wellington. This represents a 5.8% increase in the proportion of public servants working in Wellington, from 38.9% in 2000 to 44.7% in June 2022. Lesser growth has also occurred for Auckland (19.3% - 20.7%) while Canterbury has stayed largely consistent (following a noticeable drop between 2000 and 2004) and the rest of New Zealand has declined (from 31.0% to 24.9%).

Figure 1: Proportions of Public Service staff working in the main regions



(Note that although some Workforce Data is available from 2000, Occupational analysis is only available from 2007)

There has been some centralisation to the major urban centres of digital service roles

9. Our assessment is that the greater increase in Wellington is driven by work to design and support digital services, with a significant increase in information professionals and growth in ICT. Auckland and Canterbury have seen comparable percentage increases in these occupation groups, and in some cases larger, but such roles were already concentrated in Wellington and so the overall effect of this growth is seen most clearly there.

Information Professionals by main regions - change - 2007 to 2022

	2007	2022	Change #	Change %
Wellington	1,603	5,778	4,175	260.4%
Auckland	235	1,030	795	339.0%
Canterbury	197	661	464	236.4%
Rest of NZ	410	1,000	591	143.8%
Total Public Service	2,445	8,469	6,025	246.5%

10. Information Professionals include roles such as data, business and intelligence analysts, service design, non-policy advisors, librarians, project managers and governance roles.

11. Note that communications staff are not included in information professionals. They are instead a component of the other professionals group (a full breakdown of all occupation groups by the main regions is provided as Appendix 1). Across all of New Zealand as at March 2023 communications were 510 or 0.8% of the total Public Service workforce. These figures have remained relatively stable in recent years.

12. As services have moved to digital platforms this has also led to a corresponding reduction in clerical and administrative staff, an effect that has been greatest in the regions, and growth in contact centre staff, which has been more evenly spread throughout the country.

Clerical and Administrative Workers by main regions - change - 2007 to 2022

	2007	2022	Change #	Change %
Wellington	3,312	2,945	-367	-11.1%
Auckland	1,425	1,056	-369	-25.9%
Canterbury	709	376	-333	-46.9%
Rest of NZ	2,249	1,089	-1,160	-51.6%
Total Public Service	7,695	5,467	-2,228	-29.0%

Contact Centre Workers by main regions - change - 2007 to 2022

	2007	2022	Change #	Change %
Wellington	661	1,403	742	112.2%
Auckland	549	1,083	533	97.1%
Canterbury	267	693	426	159.9%
Rest of NZ	534	1,315	780	146.1%
Total Public Service	2,011	4,493	2,482	123.4%

Growth has occurred in front line services to support the population in the Wellington region.

13. In addition to the disproportionate effect of the expansion in digital services, there have also been changes as a result of investment in services required to match population growth over this period. In Wellington, there has been an increase in frontline roles, including 673 new social, health or education professionals, and 392 new inspector and regulatory officers. Across NZ as a whole, these increases go up to 3,757 for social, health or education professionals and 2,850 for inspectors and regulatory officers.

Social, Health and Education Workers by main regions - change - 2007 to 2022

	2007	2022	Change #	Change %
Wellington	1,128	1,801	673	59.7%
Auckland	1,935	2,841	906	46.8%
Canterbury	835	1,160	325	38.9%
Rest of NZ	3,019	4,872	1,853	61.4%
Total Public Service	6,917	10,674	3,757	54.3%

Inspectors and Regulatory Officers by main regions - change - 2007 to 2022

	2007	2022	Change #	Change %
Wellington	1,286	1,678	392	30.5%
Auckland	2,805	4,242	1,437	51.2%
Canterbury	1,056	1,592	536	50.7%
Rest of NZ	3,179	3,664	485	15.3%
Total Public Service	8,327	11,176	2,850	34.2%

14. The number of managers has also increased in the Wellington region, although these roles have remained a relatively stable proportion of the Wellington workforce with a small increase from 15.7% in 2007 to 17.6% in 2022. Most of this increase is due to changes in how agencies coded their roles to occupation groups rather than real world changes. These managers will be distributed across all types of work including managers in frontline service offices and digital/information managers.

Risks

15. There is a perception that growth in Wellington is associated with growth in back-office bureaucracy. The information set out in this briefing demonstrates a significant proportion of Wellington public servants are in occupations providing services to both the people of Wellington and New Zealand.

Next Steps

16. We are expecting that this information will be requested by and provided to Select Committee.

Appendix 1 - Wellington Public Service Workforce by Occupational Growth

Year	Managers	Policy Analyst	Information Professionals	Social, Health and Education Workers	ICT Professionals and Technicians	Legal, HR and Finance Professionals	Other Professionals	Inspectors and Regulatory Officers	Contact Centre Workers	Clerical and Administrative Workers	Other Occupations	Total Wellington PS
2007	2,707	2,792	1,603	1,128	1,442	1,447	619	1,286	661	3,312	280	17,277
2008	2,802	2,960	1,457	1,114	1,506	1,350	672	1,546	727	3,676	236	18,045
2009	2,908	2,565	2,068	1,248	1,910	1,427	679	1,388	1,249	2,901	104	18,448
2010	2,880	2,367	2,354	1,252	1,807	1,407	663	1,427	1,312	2,764	114	18,347
2011	2,891	2,341	2,219	1,263	1,554	1,361	692	1,543	1,121	2,583	105	17,672
2012	2,941	2,380	2,402	1,248	1,527	1,340	571	1,452	1,177	2,414	115	17,568
2013	2,988	2,489	2,670	1,309	1,634	1,390	834	1,373	1,304	2,369	134	18,493
2014	3,058	2,248	2,974	1,311	1,635	1,323	1,009	1,344	1,302	2,404	126	18,734
2015	3,053	2,278	3,380	1,214	1,579	1,339	880	1,252	1,274	2,265	123	18,637
2016	3,255	2,229	3,446	1,228	1,594	1,385	929	1,276	1,497	2,267	142	19,248
2017	3,282	2,375	3,682	1,216	1,615	1,386	888	1,374	1,524	2,281	180	19,802
2018	3,564	2,468	3,881	1,337	1,701	1,460	852	1,750	1,665	2,387	155	21,219
2019	3,909	2,688	4,522	1,409	1,766	1,597	1,047	1,727	1,677	2,542	183	23,068
2020	4,294	2,772	5,291	1,563	1,899	1,796	1,227	1,679	1,866	2,772	168	25,328
2021	4,574	3,097	5,842	1,814	2,120	1,997	1,611	1,680	1,512	2,988	174	27,410
2022	4,764	3,124	5,778	1,801	1,877	1,986	1,504	1,678	1,403	2,945	153	27,014
Growth 2007-2022	2,057	332	4,175	673	435	539	885	392	742	-367	-127	9,737
Growth 2015-2022	1,711	846	2,398	587	298	647	624	426	129	680	30	8,377
Growth 2017-2022	1,482	749	2,096	585	262	600	616	304	-121	664	-27	7,212