



Trust and confidence update July 2023

Date:	19 July 2023		
To:	Hon Andrew Little, Minister for the Public Service		
Action Sought:	Note, Agree	Due Date	NA
Report No:	2023-0202		
Contact:	Josh Masson, Chief Data Officer, Strategy and Policy <small>9(2)(a) privacy</small>		
Encl:	No	Priority:	Low
Security Level:	UNCLASSIFIED		

Executive Summary

1. Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission (Commission) runs a quarterly survey (Kiwis Count) to measure trust and confidence of New Zealanders in the Public Service. Most New Zealanders trust the Public Service based on their own experiences with government agencies.

Recommended Action

We recommend that you:

- a **Note** the contents of this report including the latest Kiwis Count results and an update on the changes in the survey.
- b **Agree** that the Commission release this briefing in full once it has been considered by you.

Agree disagree.

Hon Andrew Little
Minister for the Public Service

Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission Report: Trust and confidence update July 2023

Purpose of Report

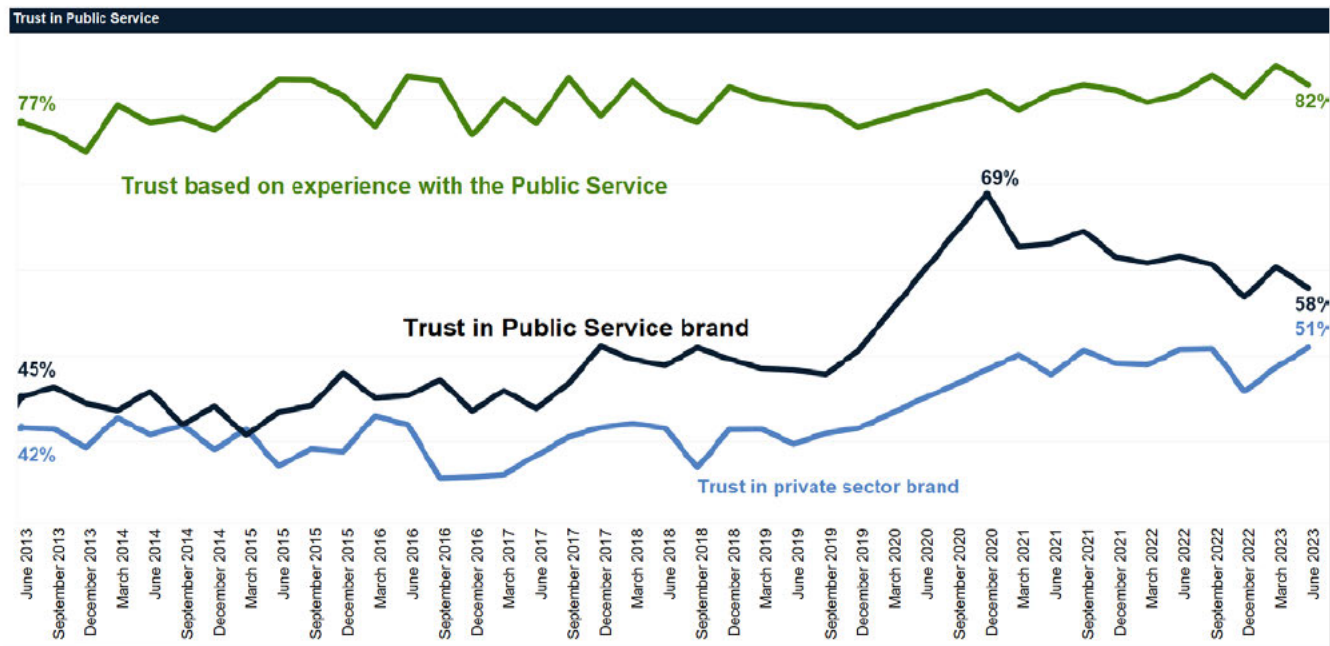
1. To inform you of the latest Kiwis Count results for the June 2023 quarter, and changes in the survey more generally.
2. To update you on the timing of the upcoming round of the OECD Trust Survey.

Analysis

Kiwis Count results

3. The Commission runs a quarterly survey, Kiwis Count, to measure trust and confidence of New Zealanders in the Public Service. This survey has been running regularly since 2012.
4. Trust based on personal experience with the Public Service results (June 2023) was 82%, compared to an all-time high of 84% in the last quarter (March) and 80% in December 2022. This continues to demonstrate that most New Zealanders trust the Public Service based on their own personal service experiences with government agencies.
5. In addition, 58% of New Zealanders said that they trust the Public Service overall, down from 60% in March. We consider this a measure of the Public Service brand, and it remains well above pre-Covid levels (51% in December 2019).
6. Both public service measures were down slightly, whereas trust in the private sector increased to 51%.
7. More details of the long-term trends can be seen in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Kiwis Count trust in public services and public/private brand by quarter

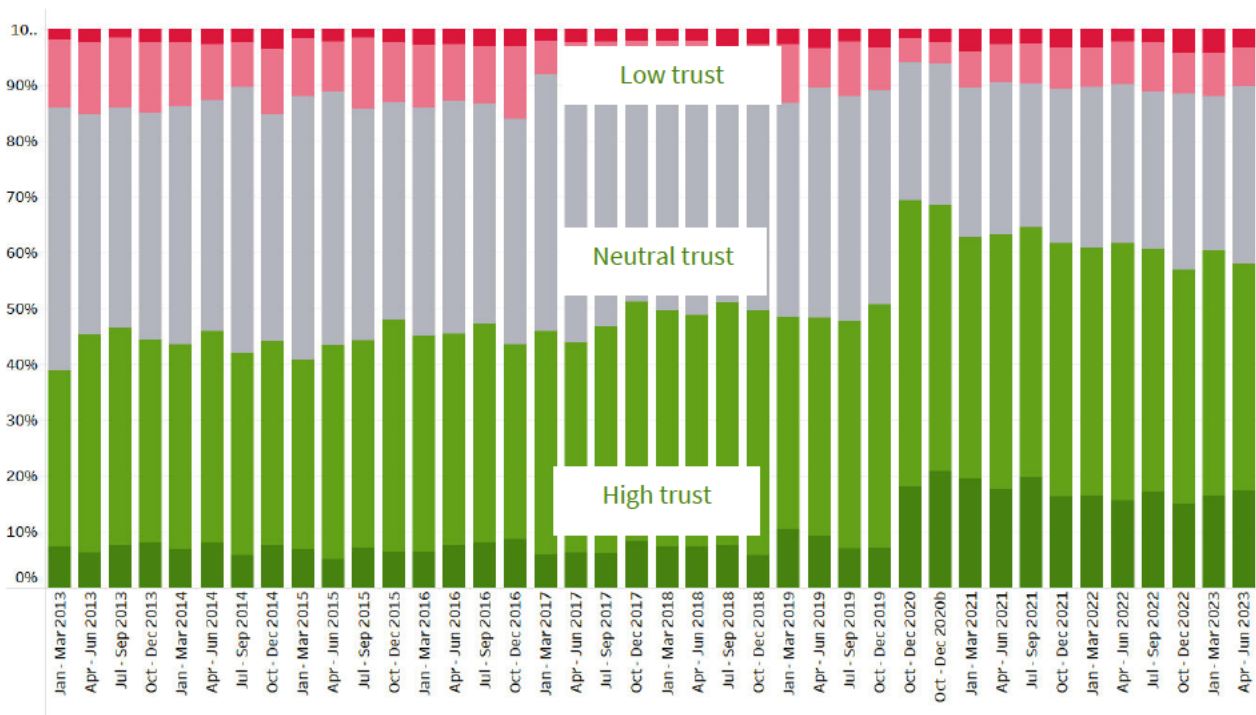


- The data for the April to June 2023 quarter was collected between the 12th and 30th of June 2023 by Gravitas OPG on behalf of the Commission.

Reasons for changes in trust

- The Kiwis Count survey asks people for their reasons for giving their trust score. For people who could identify a specific reason, responsiveness of services was the most common. This included how well services met the person’s needs in a timely way, how public servants treated them, and how easy web services were to use. Some comments were made about cost of living and safety.
- In the period that data was collected, media coverage included the recession, rate increases announced by councils, food price inflation, and a range of justice sector stories including attacks on three Chinese restaurants in Auckland. Despite winter weather setting in for much of the country, Covid cases dropped each week of the data collection.
- The percentage of people with low trust (scoring 1 or 2) has not changed markedly since 2021. In the currently quarter, 3% of people surveyed reported having no trust at all in the public service. In this quarter, the primary shift in trust in the Public Service brand came from an increase in the proportion of people who are scoring trust as neutral (3 on the 5-point scale).

Figure 2: Kiwis Count levels of trust in Public Service brand by quarter



Changes to the Kiwis Count survey

- New Zealand was selected by the OECD in 2022 for a case study about the drivers of public trust in our country.
- The case study report was published in March 2023 (NZ time) and included recommendations around the New Zealand Public Service’s performance against the drivers of trust (reliability, responsiveness and integrity).

14. As part of these recommendations, the OECD suggested measuring drivers of trust in Kiwis Count as well as increasing the sample size..
15. New questions on drivers of trust have now been trialled, in line with the OECD recommendations. The OECD framework on drivers of public trust focusses on responsiveness, reliability, openness, integrity, and fairness. Our Public Service Act values overlap with the OECD drivers, so we also developed new questions that would help us assess how well these values are being embedded.
16. We are in the process of analysing the results from this pilot, and plan to implement changes to the Kiwis Count survey in the September quarter. The sample size for Kiwis Count has also been doubled, to 2,000 people per quarter.
17. At the request of the Ministry for Ethnic Communities, we are now including Middle Eastern, Latin American, and African (MELAA) communities as a part of our sample frame of participants and in our reporting.

OECD Multi-national Trust Survey

18. The Commission has funded New Zealand's participation in the second round of the OECD Trust Survey. This survey will provide insights into how New Zealand compares internationally on a range of measures of citizen satisfaction with government services. The OECD is expected to run the survey in late October, with results published in mid-2024.

Next Steps

19. The Kiwis Count quarterly results will be released on the Commission's website on 27 July 2023. We will work with your office if you require further information on the survey results.
20. The updated survey will be implemented in the September 2023 quarter.