

Potential commitments for New Zealand’s fifth National Action Plan under the Open Government Partnership

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Review protected disclosure practice

Country	New Zealand		
Number and Name of the Commitment	1. Review protected disclosure practice		
Brief Description of the Commitment	Improve NZ's protected disclosures system by undertaking a practice review, publishing information on the consequences for retaliation, and scoping a community of practice for organisations receiving disclosures.		
Commitment Lead	Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission		
Supporting Stakeholders	Government	Civil Society	Other Actors (Parliament, Private Sector, etc)
	<i>To be completed following consultation</i>		
Period Covered	2026-2027		

Problem Definition

1. What problem does the commitment aim to address?

Who is affected? Where is it taking place? How are they affected? When are they most affected? When did the problem start? How long has the problem impacted those affected?

Protecting whistleblowers is critical to detecting and preventing serious misconduct in New Zealand and maintaining integrity. Research shows that reporting by employees is the single most important method by which illegal or corrupt activity in the workplace is brought to light.

The Protected Disclosures (Protection of Whistleblowers) Act 2022 (the Act) facilitates the disclosure and investigation of serious wrongdoing in the workplace (also known as whistleblowing) and provides protection for employees and other workers who report concerns. Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission administers this Act.

New Zealand was one of the first countries in the world to introduce dedicated legislation to protect whistleblowers – the Protected Disclosures Act 2000. This system was updated through the 2022 Act which expanded the definition of wrongdoing, removed hurdles to disclosure outside the organisation, clarified protections for disclosers, and strengthened the requirements on authorities receiving disclosures, particularly their obligation to protect the identity of the discloser.

However, there are still improvements which could increase the effectiveness of New Zealand's protected disclosure system, and make sure that people can safely speak up when they see serious wrongdoing. The [2025 Public Service Census](#) also indicated that public servants don't always feel safe to speak up about issues: Most people (90%) said they knew what to do if they experienced or witnessed wrongdoing or inappropriate behaviour, but fewer (70%) said they felt safe to speak up about those issues.

The co-creation workshops for NAP5 identified the following issues with New Zealand's protected disclosure system:

- Potential disclosers may lack information on, or feel deterred by, aspects of the protected disclosures system, such as the 'not in bad faith' requirement and the need to judge whether conduct qualifies as 'serious' wrongdoing.
- There is no data available to show whether or not the Act is achieving its aim of facilitating disclosures of serious wrongdoing and protecting people who disclose.
- There is a lack of clarity on the consequences when organisations unlawfully retaliate against whistleblowers. This could contribute to a lack of confidence in coming forward.
- Organisations which can receive protected disclosures ("appropriate authorities" under the Act) do not routinely share their practice and experience when considering protected disclosures. This could contribute to a lack of consistency in responses, and potentially non-compliance with the Act.

2. What are the causes of the problem?

Elaborate on your understanding of the causes of the problem. As much as possible, identify the root causes. Utilize problem analytical tools (e.g., problem tree, five whys, fishbone diagram, or other related methods) when necessary and provide evidence whenever possible.

Lack of maturity in applying the provisions of the Act

The Act provides for a wide range of organisations to receive protected disclosures as 'appropriate authorities.' It includes the head of any government organisation, any officer of Parliament¹, and professional membership bodies. As a result, many appropriate authorities may only rarely receive protected disclosures and may lack maturity or knowledge in applying the protections in the Act. While the Act requires public sector organisations to have (and publish information about) internal procedures for dealing with protected disclosures, in practice there may be little awareness within organisations that these exist.

Barriers to sharing experiences

Protected disclosures are confidential and sensitive. Because of this, the organisations responsible for handling them often don't know how to safely share their experiences or learn from each other. There is no official group or secure space to support this happening, while at the same time upholding the confidentiality of the disclosure.

¹ In New Zealand, an officer of Parliament means the Ombudsman, the Controller and Auditor-General, or the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment. Members of Parliament (including Ministers) are not officers of Parliament and are not appropriate authorities under the Act.

Commitment Description
1. What has been done so far to solve the problem? <i>What solutions were made available for this problem in previous years? How successful have they been?</i> <i>Legislation updated 2022</i> New Zealand's law protecting whistleblowers was updated in 2022. It introduced: 1. A broader definition of serious wrongdoing 2. Easier reporting requirements 3. Clearer responsibilities for those receiving disclosures 4. Stronger protections for whistleblowers (see above) 5. Clarity on internal processes for public sector organisations Since these changes came into force, protected disclosures have increased. But there have also been reports, most recently the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention Phase 4 Report on New Zealand, that tell us that the system could be improved. <i>Guidance issued in 2025</i> In September 2025 the Public Service Commission released: • Updated Speaking Up model standards, which set out the expectations on public sector organisations to support effective reporting and managing of wrongdoing concerns; and • New guidance for complainants: Your Complaint, Your Rights, to help people understand their rights when speaking up about bullying, harassment, or discrimination in public sector workplaces. Also in 2025, the Office of the Ombudsman published guidance for receiving and dealing with protected disclosures: Guidance for receivers Ombudsman New Zealand. <i>Increasing number of protected disclosures</i> The number of protected disclosures being made is increasing. In June 2025, the Office of the Ombudsman recorded a 300 percent increase in protected disclosures matters since the 2022 Act came into force.² This may reflect the expanded eligibility under the 2022 Act, but could also point to a greater awareness of the protections offered or a greater understanding of what constitutes serious wrongdoing at work. This increasing number of protected disclosures makes it more important that disclosures are handled fairly, consistently, and in accordance with the requirements in the Act. The problems cited above may mean that this is not happening.
2. What solution are you proposing? <i>What will you do to solve the problem? How does this differ from previous efforts? In what way will the solution solve the problem? How will the solution solve the problem? Will it solve the problem in its entirety or partially? What portion of the problem will it solve, if not the whole problem?</i> <i>Practice review</i> The Public Service Commission will undertake a review of agency practice in applying the Protected Disclosures (Protection of Whistleblowers) Act 2022.

² [Increase in awareness of whistleblowing legislation – latest survey | Ombudsman New Zealand](#)

Transparency on responses to retaliation

The Public Service Commission will research and publish information on the consequences for organisations that unlawfully retaliate against whistleblowers.

Investigating a community of practice

The Public Service Commission will scope and seek interest for a protected disclosures community of practice, similar to the [OIA Forum](#).

3. What results do we want to achieve by implementing this commitment?

What outputs would we like to produce? What changes in knowledge, skills, and capacities do we want to achieve? What changes in behaviour, systems, and practices do we want to create?

We want to achieve:

- Better awareness of the consequences for unlawful retaliation against whistleblowers and deterrence of this behaviour.
- Improved confidence that disclosures will be protected.
- Increased consistency in protected disclosure handling.
- Public confidence that there is a system to protect whistleblowing, and detect and respond to corruption or other forms of serious wrongdoing.

Commitment Analysis	
Questions	Answer (if not applicable, just answer with N/A)
1. How will the commitment promote transparency? <i>How will it help improve citizens' access to information and data? How will it make the government more transparent to citizens?</i>	A practice review would provide greater visibility into how effectively agencies are complying with the Act.
2. How will the commitment help foster accountability? <i>How will it help public agencies become more accountable to the public? How will it facilitate citizens' ability to learn how the implementation is progressing? How will it support transparent monitoring and evaluation systems?</i>	Greater transparency on compliance with the Act's requirements will enhance accountability.
3. How will the commitment improve citizen participation in defining, implementing, and monitoring solutions? <i>How will it proactively engage citizens and citizen groups?</i>	Publishing the practice review will enable citizens to monitor how agencies are implementing the Act's requirements.

Treaty of Waitangi analysis (added for NZ commitments)

What Treaty of Waitangi considerations are relevant to this commitment?

Guidance here [Treaty of Waitangi analysis | Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet \(DPMC\)](#)

This commitment does not affect Māori differently to other New Zealanders, nor does it involve any legal obligations by the Crown in a Treaty context.

While working on the 2022 amendment bill, the Public Service Commission heard that protecting vulnerable people who are raising allegations of serious wrongdoing is consistent with tikanga.

A community of practice on protected disclosures may assist appropriate authorities to build maturity in handling disclosures in a culturally appropriate way, where required.

Co-creation analysis (added for NZ commitments)

How did the co-creation process inform development of this commitment?

A practice review of the Act was on the PSC's Integrity Action Plan prior to the workshops, but did not have a detailed work programme attached to it. Points raised at the workshops will help to inform the focus of the review.

A community of practice, and suggestion to publish the consequences for retaliation, are both new ideas that were shared during the workshops.

Commitment Planning

(This is an initial planning process largely looking at milestones and expected outputs, as well as key stakeholders involved.)

Milestones	Expected Outputs	Expected Completion Date	Stakeholders		
<i>(Milestones are part of a series of actions or events that, when executed, will lead to the achievement of the result the commitment would like to achieve.)</i>	<i>(Outputs are concrete, objectively-verifiable results that are direct products of activities conducted or implemented.)</i>				
<i>To be completed following consultation</i>			Lead:		
			<u>Supporting Stakeholders</u>		
			Government	CSOs	Others (e.g., Parliament, Private Sector etc)

Develop a Corruption Assessment Tool

Country	New Zealand		
Number and Name of the Commitment	2. Develop a Corruption Assessment Tool		
Brief Description of the Commitment	Design a Corruption Assessment Tool for public sector agencies to identify corruption and insider threat risks within their organisation. The tool will assist agencies to take steps to mitigate these risks.		
Commitment Lead	Serious Fraud Office		
Supporting Stakeholders	Government	Civil Society	Other Actors (Parliament, Private Sector, etc)
	<i>To be completed following consultation</i>		
Period Covered	2026-2027		

Problem Definition**1. What problem does the commitment aim to address?**

Who is affected? Where is it taking place? How are they affected? When are they most affected? When did the problem start? How long has the problem impacted those affected?

Global estimates suggest approximately 0.45% - 5.6% of public funds are lost to fraud, error and corruption each year. In New Zealand, this would equate to around \$601 million - \$7.48 billion, or \$12.97 billion when tax revenues are included.

Harm from corruption isn't limited to dollar values. It damages the integrity of the public sector resulting in declining public trust in government institutions. The resulting reputational damage to New Zealand can also impact investor confidence, meaning long term economic harm than can be difficult to quantify but extends far beyond the public sector. This can have serious consequences, including eroding the integrity of New Zealand's institutions and social licence of agencies, degradation of capability, economic damage, and compromised national security.

The true scale of the issue is unknown. Public sector agencies in New Zealand are not currently required to report on fraud and corruption that may be occurring, or what controls they have in place to prevent it. This lack of insight means agencies are unable to meaningfully intervene at a system level, understand where to focus detection and prevention activities or assess their effectiveness. It also leaves New Zealand on the back foot when it comes to leveraging the power of data analytics to identify indicators of fraud and corruption.

The Serious Fraud Office explored corruption and fraud in the context of detection for its 2025 Long-term Insights Briefing, concluding that the harm caused by individual acts of bribery or corruption can have wide-reaching impacts. A corruptly awarded infrastructure, building or roading contract can have wide scale health and safety implications to whole communities, if it means a contract is awarded to a sub-qualified party. More broadly, corruption is corrosive to trust and confidence in public institutions. Even very low levels of bribery can drastically impact public corruption perceptions.

Much as organisations are alert to risk across all parts of the business, including health and safety, financial and environmental risks, they should also be alert to the risk of insider threat. A general lack of awareness can heighten the risk of insider threat. It can help if employees are able to identify and report red flags in others' behaviours.

2. What are the causes of the problem?

Elaborate on your understanding of the causes of the problem. As much as possible, identify the root causes. Utilize problem analytical tools (e.g., problem tree, five whys, fishbone diagram, or other related methods) when necessary and provide evidence whenever possible.

Dr Simon Chapple prepared a report for Transparency International New Zealand assessing the effectiveness of anti-corruption institutions in New Zealand in deterring, detecting and exposing corruption.

It found that observed decline in New Zealand's Corruption Perceptions Index score represented a real underlying rise in corruption - reflecting previously identified issues including political lobbying and transparency in political donations, political neutrality in public sector officials, changes in New Zealand's trade patterns, increasing immigration from high corruption countries, growing political polarisation, a weakening of the general multi-lateral cooperative world, and a growing willingness of some foreign states to weaponise trade and local immigrant populations.

Some of these findings were also reflected in a report published by the Helen Clark Foundation "Shining a Light: Improving Transparency in New Zealand's political and governance systems" which noted that issues such as political party funding and lobbying risked eroding trust and confidence in public institutions.

In New Zealand the most common insider threat risks are fraud, theft of intellectual property, and corruption. A breach of trust within an organisation may also take the form of information leaks, privacy breaches or sabotaged systems. As agencies generally have low maturity in understanding of these risks, mitigations are often ad hoc and reactive, rather than proactive and focussed on prevention.

Commitment Description

1. What results do we want to achieve by implementing this commitment?

What outputs would we like to produce? What changes in knowledge, skills, and capacities do we want to achieve? What changes in behaviour, systems, and practices do we want to create?

In 2023, the Serious Fraud Office published guidance on Insider Threats. This guidance helped to raise awareness about insider threats at a high level, specific to the public sector. The guidance has been supported by Community of Practice meetings with the SFO's Counter Fraud Centre, to discuss the guidance in more depth and provide practical lessons for agencies to help them start to recognise where their risks might lie, and what might cause insider threats to emerge. However, the guidance is not a required standard, so agency awareness of the existence of the guidance is limited, and uptake is voluntary.

The SFO led Anti-Corruption Taskforce Pilot was launched in July 2025 with the aim of testing a way to build a clearer, system-wide picture of corruption and fraud risks across the New Zealand public service. It sought to highlight gaps, inform targeted responses and assess emerging threats.

The New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (NZSIS) has a role in detecting and helping to prevent insider threats. The NZSIS's Security Threat Environment 2025 report includes information and case studies about insider threats, and protective security advice for mitigating insider threat risks.

2. What solution are you proposing?

What will you do to solve the problem? How does this differ from previous efforts? In what way will the solution solve the problem? How will the solution solve the problem? Will it solve the problem in its entirety or partially? What portion of the problem will it solve, if not the whole problem?

The Serious Fraud Office will design and make available a Corruption Assessment Tool that will permit public sector agencies to identify corruption and insider threat risks within their organisation. The tool will support agencies to accurately identify and assess insider threats presented by the nature and function of their organisations, and provide guidance and education to support the mitigation of those risks.

3. What results do we want to achieve by implementing this commitment?

What outputs would we like to produce? What changes in knowledge, skills, and capacities do we want to achieve? What changes in behaviour, systems, and practices do we want to create?

We want to achieve:

- Better capability within agencies to detect and act on corruption risks specific to their environment. This will enable agencies to enact targeted interventions, support improved training and education for potentially at-risk staff or positions.
- Greater public confidence that the public sector is live to the risks it might encounter and has a plan to prevent them before they occur.
- Hardened defences for the public sector against those that might seek to corrupt it, from within or without.

Commitment Analysis	
Questions	Answer (if not applicable, just answer with N/A)
4. How will the commitment promote transparency? <i>How will it help improve citizens' access to information and data? How will it make the government more transparent to citizens?</i>	N/A
5. How will the commitment help foster accountability? <i>How will it help public agencies become more accountable to the public? How will it facilitate citizens' ability to learn how the implementation is progressing? How will it support transparent monitoring and evaluation systems?</i>	Developing and making this tool available would provide a level of assurance to the public that the public sector is live to the risks it might encounter, and has a plan to prevent them before they occur.

6. How will the commitment improve citizen participation in defining, implementing, and monitoring solutions? <i>How will it proactively engage citizens and citizen groups?</i>	Important research in civil society will inform work to identify the risks and red flags for potentially corrupt conduct.
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Treaty of Waitangi analysis (added for NZ commitments)

What Treaty of Waitangi considerations are relevant to this commitment?

Guidance here [Treaty of Waitangi analysis | Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet \(DPMC\)](#)

This commitment supports the principle of protection by enabling agencies to detect and prevent corruption. It will help to protect the rights guaranteed in the Treaty of Waitangi, and support fair and transparent decision-making in areas affecting Māori communities, resources, and governance.

Co-creation analysis (added for NZ commitments)

How did the co-creation process inform development of this commitment?

Discussion at the workshops highlighted that New Zealand's response to the threat of corruption needs to be risk-based, and tailored to the circumstances through which corruption may happen. This commitment responds to that discussion by improving the ability of agencies to assess corruption risk within their organisations.

Commitment Planning

(This is an initial planning process largely looking at milestones and expected outputs, as well as key stakeholders involved.)

Milestones	Expected Outputs	Expected Completion Date	Stakeholders		
<i>(Milestones are part of a series of actions or events that, when executed, will lead to the achievement of the result the commitment would like to achieve.)</i>	<i>(Outputs are concrete, objectively-verifiable results that are direct products of activities conducted or implemented.)</i>				
<i>To be completed following consultation</i>			Lead:		
			<u>Supporting Stakeholders</u>		
			Government	CSOs	Others (e.g., Parliament, Private Sector etc)

Support ethical government – private sector career transitions

Country	New Zealand		
Number and Name of the Commitment	3. Support ethical government – private sector career transitions		
Brief Description of the Commitment	Produce a discussion document exploring the movement of individuals (elected and non-elected) between government and private sector roles, including lobbying, and identify potential options to support ethical transitions.		
Commitment Lead	Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission Ministry of Justice		
Supporting Stakeholders	Government	Civil Society	Other Actors (Parliament, Private Sector, etc)
	<i>To be completed following consultation</i>		
Period Covered	2026-2027		

Problem Definition**1. What problem does the commitment aim to address?**

Who is affected? Where is it taking place? How are they affected? When are they most affected? When did the problem start? How long has the problem impacted those affected?

Individuals (elected and non-elected) transitioning between roles in government and the private sector generates a useful exchange of skills and perspectives. When well managed these transitions can enrich both sectors. New Zealand has comparatively few restrictions or regulations on individuals transitioning between government and private sector employment (in either direction), and the expectations on those making this move are not always clear. This creates two issues:

- **Disincentive on career transitions**

A lack of safeguards may discourage individuals from moving between the public and private sectors if they cannot do so without taking on professional risk. Government benefits from learning from the private sector and from having individuals with government experience working in industry. To enable this exchange, it is important that people feel confident taking on public office or public sector roles, knowing they can safely transition to a career with the private sector.

- **Public trust risk**

A perception that government-private sector transitions are not ethically managed can undermine public trust in government. Risks can arise through real or perceived conflicts of interest when

individuals move into roles with insider knowledge or where they may use their connections to benefit their clients, or themselves, at the expense of the broader public interest.

There is limited understanding of how widespread these issues are, or what policy options might offer a proportionate and effective response to the potential risks. This commitment aims to address this lack of evidence and gather public input on potential options to mitigate risks and promote ethical career transitions between government and the private sector.

2. What are the causes of the problem?

Elaborate on your understanding of the causes of the problem. As much as possible, identify the root causes. Utilize problem analytical tools (e.g., problem tree, five whys, fishbone diagram, or other related methods) when necessary and provide evidence whenever possible.

A lack of clear expectations around career transitions causes the issues cited above. Low public confidence that these transitions are ethically managed has led to concern that New Zealand has insufficient safeguards to prevent the risks of the 'revolving door' phenomenon: potential misuse of privileged information and access to decision-makers that lacks transparency.

Independent research has highlighted the following factors which contribute to public trust risks with government – private sector career transitions:

- Potential growth in the local lobbying industry, though the lack of regulation around lobbying in New Zealand makes this difficult to quantify.³
- The concentration of executive decision-making power in New Zealand's system.⁴
- Complacency around emerging issues (such as income inequality) and an informal approach to political integrity and access.⁵

Commitment Description

1. What has been done so far to solve the problem?

What solutions were made available for this problem in previous years? How successful have they been?

There are some controls in place to address the two primary risks of government – private sector career transitions (potential privileged information and access to decision-makers that lacks transparency):

Misuse (or potential misuse) of privileged information

- The Public Service Code of Conduct requires information to be used only for proper purposes
 - However, the Code applies only to current public servants, not former MPs, Ministers, or ex-public servants.
- The Cabinet Manual restricts former Ministers from disclosing official information not already in the public domain.
- Legal provisions (e.g., Crimes Act s78A, Summary Offences Act s20A) prevent unauthorised disclosure of official information but apply only in cases involving national security, public order, or economic stability.

³ Thomas Anderson and Simon Chapple, *Grease or Sand in the Wheels of Democracy? The market for lobbying in New Zealand*, Policy Quarterly, 14 (2), 2018, p 13.

⁴ Max Rashbrooke, *A Balance of Voices: Options for the Regulation of Lobbying in New Zealand*, Health Coalition Aotearoa, 2024, p 23.

⁵ Philippa Yasbek, *Shining a Light: Improving Transparency in New Zealand's Political and Governance Systems*, Helen Clark Foundation, 2024, p 22.

Access to decision-makers

- A 2023 Ministry of Justice consultation identified the “revolving door” between political and lobbying roles as a source of public distrust.
- The Cabinet Manual states that Ministers’ decisions should not be influenced by prospects of future employment.
- Current public servants may need to declare conflicts of interest from personal relationships with former colleagues now working in the private sector.

However, these controls have not resulted in any noticeable changes to public trust on this issue, or to the numbers of individuals moving between public and private sector role (noting that data on this movement is limited).

2. What solution are you proposing?

What will you do to solve the problem? How does this differ from previous efforts? In what way will the solution solve the problem? How will the solution solve the problem? Will it solve the problem in its entirety or partially? What portion of the problem will it solve, if not the whole problem?

The Ministry of Justice and the Public Service Commission will jointly develop a discussion document that explores the public trust risks of, and disincentives to, government - private sector transitions. It will seek public input on these issues and propose potential policy options to clarify expectations and support these transitions while maintaining public trust.

Aspects of this build on the [Ministry of Justice’s previous political lobbying work](#), but the proposed work expands the scope beyond just elected officials to include senior public servants, and looks to progress work on a specific aspect of lobbying regulation (i.e. the ‘revolving door’).

3. What results do we want to achieve by implementing this commitment?

What outputs would we like to produce? What changes in knowledge, skills, and capacities do we want to achieve? What changes in behavior, systems, and practices do we want to create?

We want to achieve:

- Improved transparency of the factors influencing government decision making in New Zealand
- Greater public confidence that risks arising from the revolving door phenomenon can be managed
- Clearer understanding of options to reduce those risks

Commitment Analysis

Questions	Answer (if not applicable, just answer with N/A)
7. How will the commitment promote transparency? <i>How will it help improve citizens’ access to information and data? How will it make the government more transparent to citizens?</i>	The discussion document will increase transparency by clarifying current arrangements for government – private sector career transitions, identifying the scale of risk, and exploring options to support ethical transitions.
8. How will the commitment help foster accountability?	The commitment will foster accountability by increasing visibility into the revolving door phenomenon and any resulting influence on government decision-making. By

<i>How will it help public agencies become more accountable to the public? How will it facilitate citizens' ability to learn how the implementation is progressing? How will it support transparent monitoring and evaluation systems?</i>	publishing a discussion document that outlines current arrangements and explores options for reform, it enables greater responsiveness to public concerns.
9. How will the commitment improve citizen participation in defining, implementing, and monitoring solutions? <i>How will it proactively engage citizens and citizen groups?</i>	The discussion document will support citizen participation by engaging relevant groups and experts in exploring the issue, and proposing options to mitigate risks and improve transparency.

Treaty of Waitangi analysis (added for NZ commitments)

What Treaty of Waitangi considerations are relevant to this commitment?

Guidance here [Treaty of Waitangi analysis | Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet \(DPMC\)](#)

In its targeted consultation of a voluntary code for lobbyists in 2023, the Ministry of Justice heard that the rights of rūnanga to engage as Te Tiriti partners must not be conflated with lobbying. The Ministry also heard that te ao Māori could guide good practice expectations for lobbying. Kawa and tikanga already underpin an ethical approach to lobbying - for example, statements made on the marae are heard by everyone.

Research commissioned by Health Coalition Aotearoa highlights that options to regulate lobbying and/or the revolving door phenomenon should not unreasonably limit opportunities available to Māori working in and around government. It cites a potential that regulation could "create a significant burden for Māori who do work for government and then progress other work and/or advocate for their Iwi in their 'downtime'".⁶

Co-creation analysis (added for NZ commitments)

How did the co-creation process inform development of this commitment?

This topic was raised in both workshops across different groups. While improving transparency around the "revolving door" for senior public servants was already identified as a potential commitment in the Public Service Commission's Integrity Action Plan, participants suggested that a stronger approach would be to broaden the scope beyond just the public service and ensure it covered movement in both directions (i.e. individuals leaving government to join the private sector, and vice versa).

In response, the Public Service Commission and the Ministry of Justice worked together to expand the scope of the commitment.

Commitment Planning

⁶ Mather Solutions Limited, *Māori Perspectives on Options for Lobbying Regulations*, Health Coalition Aotearoa, 2024, p14.

(This is an initial planning process largely looking at milestones and expected outputs, as well as key stakeholders involved.)

Milestones	Expected Outputs	Expected Completion Date	Stakeholders		
<i>(Milestones are part of a series of actions or events that, when executed, will lead to the achievement of the result the commitment would like to achieve.)</i>	<i>(Outputs are concrete, objectively-verifiable results that are direct products of activities conducted or implemented.)</i>				
<i>To be completed following consultation</i>			Lead:		
			<u>Supporting Stakeholders</u>		
			Government	CSOs	Others (e.g., Parliament, Private Sector etc)

Explore options to improve transparency of senior leaders' conflicts of interest

Country	New Zealand		
Number and Name of the Commitment	4. Explore options to improve transparency of senior leaders' conflicts of interest		
Brief Description of the Commitment	Research and scope options to improve transparency of conflicts of interest held by senior leaders in the public sector.		
Commitment Lead	Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission		
Supporting Stakeholders	Government	Civil Society	Other Actors (Parliament, Private Sector, etc)
	<i>To be completed following consultation</i>		
Period Covered	2026-2027		

Problem Definition**1. What problem does the commitment aim to address?**

Who is affected? Where is it taking place? How are they affected? When are they most affected? When did the problem start? How long has the problem impacted those affected?

The public service must identify and manage conflicts of interest well. This is required to uphold confidence in public sector decision-making and impartiality. Poorly managed conflicts of interest can undermine public trust and damage the integrity of public decision-making. Managing conflicts of interest is particularly important for senior public service leaders, like chief executives or board chairs and members, who often make significant decisions about public spending and setting agency direction.

Currently, under the Public Service Commissioner's model standard on conflicts of interest, chief executives of agencies must declare any conflict of interest to the Public Service Commission and crown entity board members must disclose any interests in accordance with the Crown Entities Act 2004. However, there is no publication of declared interests or management plans. This limits the transparency of how senior leaders' conflicts of interest are managed and prevents any public scrutiny of these interests.

The lack of centralised data about senior public servant's interests was noted as an area for improvement at OGP workshops.

2. What are the causes of the problem?

Elaborate on your understanding of the causes of the problem. As much as possible, identify the root causes. Utilize problem analytical tools (e.g., problem tree, five whys, fishbone diagram, or other related methods) when necessary and provide evidence whenever possible.

There is no requirement in legislation or Public Service Commission guidance that senior public servants' interests must be published. Although this could happen without any requirement in legislation or guidance, it has not occurred to date. This contrasts with government Ministers, whose interests are published by DPMC, in line with Cabinet Manual requirements.

Commitment Description**1. What has been done so far to solve the problem?**

What solutions were made available for this problem in previous years? How successful have they been?

In the past year PSC has strengthened conflict of interest management practices by:

- Strengthening and reissuing the conflict of interest model standard.
- Publishing the one-page guide to conflict of interest conversations.
- Developing a set of examples of conflict of interest management plans, to support public servants and their managers to create effective management plans.

These tools support better management of conflicts of interest across the public service for all employees, but have not focused on the interests of senior leaders.

This year PSC also issued the *Action Plan to strengthen integrity 2025 – 2028*. A stretch goal in the action plan is to "Explore options to increase transparency of chief executive and board chair interests & management plans – 2026/2027 start". Work has not commenced on this potential stretch goal.

2. What solution are you proposing?

What will you do to solve the problem? How does this differ from previous efforts? In what way will the solution solve the problem? How will the solution solve the problem? Will it solve the problem in its entirety or partially? What portion of the problem will it solve, if not the whole problem?

PSC will undertake work to better understand the problem, scope possible solutions (including privacy implications) and consult stakeholders. At a high-level this would look like:

- **Stage One – Research and Policy Development:** Research conflict of interest management practices for senior public servants, drawing on international comparisons with Australia, the UK, and Canada.
- **Stage Two – Scope Options:** Develop and consult on options to enhance transparency of senior leaders' interests, such as public registers or independent review processes, incorporating stakeholder feedback.
- **Stage Three – Implementation:** Implement the preferred approach.

3. What results do we want to achieve by implementing this commitment?

What outputs would we like to produce? What changes in knowledge, skills, and capacities do we want to achieve? What changes in behavior, systems, and practices do we want to create?

We want to achieve:

- Improved transparency of senior public servants' conflicts of interest
- Greater public access to information about senior public servants' conflicts of interest and greater assurance about how these are managed.

Commitment Analysis	
Questions	Answer (if not applicable, just answer with N/A)
10. How will the commitment promote transparency? <i>How will it help improve citizens' access to information and data? How will it make the government more transparent to citizens?</i>	Depending on the options scoped, it could provide the public with greater access to information about how senior public servants' interests are managed.
11. How will the commitment help foster accountability? <i>How will it help public agencies become more accountable to the public? How will it facilitate citizens' ability to learn how the implementation is progressing? How will it support transparent monitoring and evaluation systems?</i>	Publishing senior public servants' interests and management plans supports accountability by better enabling public and Parliamentary scrutiny. It also demonstrates a proactive approach to risk management by showing how a conflict of interest is being managed.
12. How will the commitment improve citizen participation in defining, implementing, and monitoring solutions? <i>How will it proactively engage citizens and citizen groups?</i>	The perspectives of stakeholders, including relevant civil society organisations, will be part of the policy development process.

Treaty of Waitangi analysis (added for NZ commitments)
What Treaty of Waitangi considerations are relevant to this commitment?
<i>Guidance here</i> Treaty of Waitangi analysis Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) Increased transparency of senior public servants' conflicts of interest supports the principle of participation by allowing Māori to better understand and scrutinise these conflicts.

Co-creation analysis (added for NZ commitments)
How did the co-creation process inform development of this commitment?
At workshops several stakeholders raised conflicts of interest as an area for a potential commitment. Key issues included: • No centralised conflict of interest data is available for senior public servants. • There is a lack of leadership culture promoting integrity

A potential commitment was noted as:

- Create a central register of declared conflicts of interest for senior public servants.

This commitment was informed by this feedback.

Commitment Planning			
<i>(This is an initial planning process largely looking at milestones and expected outputs, as well as key stakeholders involved.)</i>			
Milestones	Expected Outputs	Expected Completion Date	Stakeholders
<i>(Milestones are part of a series of actions or events that, when executed, will lead to the achievement of the result the commitment would like to achieve.)</i>	<i>(Outputs are concrete, objectively-verifiable results that are direct products of activities conducted or implemented.)</i>		
<i>To be completed following consultation</i>			Lead:
			<u>Supporting Stakeholders</u>
			Government CSOs Others (e.g., Parliament, Private Sector etc)