



## An overview of the changes

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New Zealand's public service has an enviable international reputation for integrity, responsiveness to government and effectiveness for New Zealanders. The most recent [Kiwis Count Survey](#) reinforces this reputation, with 2019 results showing New Zealanders have increasing trust in, and satisfaction with, their public services. The new Public Service Act 2020 (the Act) builds on the high-performance base of the public service, with the overall aim of delivering better outcomes and services for all New Zealanders.

The Act provides a modern legislative framework that enables a more adaptive, agile and collaborative public service and includes stronger recognition of the role of the public service in supporting the partnership between Māori and the Crown.

The key enablers to this are: public service culture and behaviour; an updated framework for employment; effective leadership; and a greater range of options for configuring fit-for-purpose public service organisations.

### Ngā whakataunga matua | Major decisions

The Government has repealed and replaced the State Sector Act 1988 with the new Public Service Act 2020. This new Act includes provisions across five key areas that will help the public service join up services around New Zealanders' needs and secure public trust and confidence, so it remains well placed to serve New Zealand in the future. The five areas are:

- A unified public service
- Strengthening the Crown's relationships with Māori
- Employment and workforce
- Leadership
- Organisational flexibility

Along with the system-level public service reform, there is also work being done to improve how public service agencies organise themselves in the regions.



## Ngā pātai me ngā whakautu | Questions and answers

### **Why do we need the new Public Service Act?**

The previous State Sector Act was more than 30 years old and had been amended 13 times. Times have changed and there are areas where the public service can do better. The new Public Service Act reflects the context and expectations the public service needs to respond to, today and into the future.

### **How does the new Public Service Act acknowledge a post COVID-19 environment?**

The response of the New Zealand public service to the coronavirus pandemic has been widely recognised as exemplary, receiving accolades both locally and internationally. In many ways, the pandemic revealed the public service at its finest – working across boundaries to meet the needs of New Zealanders in a complex and rapidly changing environment.

The new Act acknowledges the need for more flexible and collaborative approaches to tackling the more complex challenges that lie ahead and provides the legislative environment that is required to enable this.

### **What is the significance of the change in focus from State Sector Act to the Public Service Act?**

The naming of the Act itself also signals a shift in focus, placing a clear emphasis on the benefit to New Zealand's individuals, organisations and communities as the key focus and motivation for all public service agencies and activities.

### **How will New Zealanders benefit from the changes in the new legislation?**

The public service works for the Government that New Zealanders elect and New Zealanders depend on the public service for a wide range of services. A public service that is more adaptive, agile and collaborative can more effectively meet the needs of New Zealanders and the communities it serves.

### **Was there an appetite for change?**

Yes. Consultation feedback showed strong support for the overall direction of the reforms. The new Act builds on the already strong reputation of the public service for delivering on New Zealanders' needs.

### **When will the changes take place?**

Some changes have already come into effect, but many of the provisions in the Act are for tools and instruments that are designed to enable the public service to meet both current and future needs. These changes will come into effect over time as the need arises.