



Ngā whakahaere o te ratonga tūmatanui Organisations of the public service

The public service needs to be able to organise flexibly around the needs of New Zealanders without being unnecessarily constrained by administrative boundaries.

Ngā whakataunga matua | Major decisions

Under the Public Service Act 2020 (the Act), the new system design provisions allow for:

- A more flexible departmental agency model.
- Two different types of public service joint ventures – interdepartmental ventures and joint operational arrangements – that support joined-up, agile service delivery and joint resource management, including of assets and staff.
- Interdepartmental executive boards that support joined-up planning and budgeting and/or policy alignment on complex cross-cutting issues.

Ka pēhea mō ngā kaimahi tūmatanui | What it means for public servants

Under the Act, there are more formalised and flexible options for organisational arrangements to support public service agencies taking a truly collaborative, joined-up approach to tackling some of the big challenges facing the country today.

This means that:

- Some of the most successful collaborations are further strengthened.
- The ability to be truly collaborative is supported and encouraged, rather than held back or obstructed by system settings.

Collaborating agencies are now able to align strategy and planning activities in overlapping policy areas. This makes it possible to harness the capabilities of individual agencies to collectively plan for and respond to complex cross-agency problems or priorities.

Ngā pātai me ngā whakautu | Questions and answers

Why is there a need to change the way the Public Service organises itself?

The current organisation of our public service into agencies that operate as separate businesses works well for many tasks. However, it has struggled to respond effectively to complex issues that cross agency boundaries.

What can an interdepartmental venture or executive board do that couldn't be done before?

Until now, cross-agency working arrangements have been voluntary and it was often difficult to fund and sustain them over time. Interdepartmental ventures and executive boards provide formal structures to support collaborative working. For example, they allow boards of chief executives to administer funding and employ public servants collectively, instead of one chief executive having to do so on behalf of a group.

What is the difference between an interdepartmental venture and an interdepartmental executive board?

An interdepartmental venture brings together the delivery of services from across a small number of agencies. An interdepartmental executive board provides collective strategic policy advice to Ministers for cross-agency issues.

Who appoints the board members of interdepartmental ventures?

The agencies involved are determined by Cabinet when the venture is established. Interdepartmental venture boards are automatically comprised of the chief executives of the agencies involved in the venture.

Who decides which chief executives govern executive boards?

Cabinet determines which agencies are included in the remit of the board. The Public Service Commissioner – as the employer of Public Service chief executives – then appoints chief executives from within this remit as board members, after consulting with Ministers.

Who employs the staff in the executive boards and interdepartmental ventures?

The board of an interdepartmental venture can employ staff directly, in the same way the board of a Crown entity does. An interdepartmental executive board can act as the employer of staff, for most purposes, in a similar arrangement to the departmental agency model.



What are the differences between the new flexible departmental agency model, and the old one?

The new model provides additional flexibility across three key structural decisions:

- Whether the departmental agency operates within the strategic framework of its host department or sets its own strategic framework.
- Whether the departmental agency will receive corporate service support from its host department.
- Whether the departmental agency holds control and responsibility for the financial management of assets.

The Public Service Act also clarifies the responsibility of the departmental agency chief executive for the relationship with individual departmental agency employees, and how relevant legislation such as the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 and the Privacy Act 2020 apply to departmental agencies.