

The Public Service Act 2020

Transcript of sign language video

The new Public Service Act 2020 (the Act) provides a modern legislative framework for achieving a more adaptive and collaborative public service. A more collaborative and cohesive public service is needed to address complex issues that span agency boundaries, and to provide wraparound services based on New Zealanders' needs, rather than agency convenience.

The Act aims to:

- clearly establish the purpose, principles, and values of an apolitical public service, as well as its role in government formation;
- recognise the role of the public service to support the Crown in its commitment to its relationships with Māori;
- provide a more flexible set of options for organisational arrangements to support the public service in better responding to priorities and joining up more effectively;
- increase interoperability across the public service workforce and preserves the future public service as an attractive and inclusive place to work; and
- strengthen leadership across the public service, providing for system and future-focused leadership.

Key messages

- People increasingly expect government to solve more complex and challenging problems and deliver services in ways that work best for them. The aim of this Bill is to build a unified public service that delivers high quality, efficient, citizen-centred services and improved wellbeing for New Zealanders.
- This gives us the opportunity to address some of the biggest and most complex issues facing us today – such as climate change or domestic violence. Agencies and partners need to be able to work together on shared, people-focused kaupapa and outcomes.
- We are already moving towards the vision of a leading edge, unified and trusted public service serving New Zealanders.
- The role of the public service is to make the best possible difference to the wellbeing of New Zealanders, delivering services that are easy to access and joined up around their needs, and serving an ever more diverse and changing community.

A unified public service is more important than ever

We are building a stronger and modern public service that's a key enabler of good government, can contribute to people achieving their aspirations for their country and is grounded in a commitment of service to the community.

This will take time. To address some of the biggest and most complex issues facing us today – such as climate change or domestic violence – agencies and partners need to be able to push together on shared, people-focused kaupapa and outcomes.

We are taking steps to strengthen and protect the cherished foundations of our whakapapa ... how the public service supports New Zealand's constitutional and democratic form of government,

delivers high-quality and efficient services, pursues the long-term public interest and opens doors to more active citizenship.

An important step is recognising the public service's role supporting the Crown in its relationships with Māori, under the Treaty of Waitangi. We know we need to do better. And we will.

We're also reaffirming what motivates public servants – their spirit of service to the community.

To move forward, it's important that we celebrate and learn from what we've already achieved and what can be strengthened. We are making good progress on several fronts.

We now have collective system leadership driven by the State Services Leadership Team of chief executives. They've identified focus areas that include building workforce diversity and inclusive practices to achieve collective, system-wide impact.

More women are in senior leadership roles than ever before and half of all our senior management roles are held by women. We have the lowest gender pay gap in the Public service since measurement began in 2000.

We are providing opportunities for public servants to better understand te ao Māori, the Māori world view. This is vital in supporting the Crown to strengthen its relationship with Māori and deliver better outcomes for tāngata whenua. New departmental agency Te Arawhiti is leading work to build system capability. Te Puni Kōkiri continues to lead policy advice and strengthen its approach to implementation on issues important to Māori – whenua, te reo, mātauranga and intellectual property, Māori media and digital innovation.

We are supporting interns and young leaders through strengthening development offerings in Māori and Pacific networks, which will also help us increase our numbers of ethnically diverse leaders.

We're using digital technology to modernise and transform the public service, making sure people and businesses are at the heart of these changes. We know that technology-based services don't work for everyone, so we are also working on ensuring accessibility for all in ways that work for them.

Culture and behaviour change is one of the key focus areas in the Act. Enshrining the purpose of the public service and our principles and values in legislation will help to unite and reconnect us with the commitment to serving our communities that we all share.

Combined, these changes will help strengthen the constitutional role of the public service and help ensure we have the organisational flexibility and system leadership needed to meet the challenges New Zealand will continue to face, as experienced through recent traumatic events.

Preserving these bedrock behaviours in law in one prominent place will help protect the integrity of the public service and strengthen public trust and confidence, so that we are well-placed to serve New Zealand into the future.

Other important legislative provisions:

- Open the door to a wider range of more flexible organisational options to help agencies join up around complex problems that require collaboration.
- Encourage public servants to see themselves as members of one service, within which, given the right circumstances, they can move across and strengthen other areas of the system. Not just in times of crisis, but also when it's the right thing to do.
- Introduce a formal commitment to building a diverse and inclusive public service.

- Bring Crown agents – such as District Health Boards, ACC and Kāinga Ora – into the public service whānau, to strengthen the shared identity and unify the behavioural foundations of all public servants, regardless of where they work.

This legislation provides an enabling framework. Changes are being phased over time, in a managed way. We will continue to build on and further strengthen aspects of our current system that are working well.

This is an evolution, not a revolution.

This is the Public service we are building together.

Public service will always be about the tireless pursuit of improved, equitable outcomes for all people in Aotearoa New Zealand. So as we build the public service of the future, what will change?

1. We will be more joined up. People increasingly expect government to solve more complex and challenging problems and deliver services in ways that work best for them. Thirty years ago we transformed the public service to enhance customer experience through individual agencies. Now, with these raised expectations, no government department can make a difference on its own.
2. We will harness our resilience and adaptability. We have seen through a number of recent crises, natural and man-made, that we can pull together to support not only individuals but businesses and the wider community. We have an opportunity to build on these experiences for a well-prepared future.
3. We will be agile. Matrix-style teams made up of people with diverse skills and experiences will come together to work on a specific goal, regardless of which department they are employed by or located in. The existing boundaries will become permeable, with bits being taken apart and put together to respond agilely to new shared challenges.
4. We will understand and promote te reo Māori and bicultural world views to support a stronger Crown relationship with Māori, meet our obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and improve outcomes and services for Māori.
5. We will become enablers – starting where people need and want us to start. People won't have to shop around individual agencies to get what they need. Digital technology and data provide the engines that can help with this. Many transactions will be digital including the use of AI, supported by high-level relational services to ensure access for all.
6. Our workforce will also be flexible. Technology will enable teams to operate across different locations and different timetables. Our physical work environments may look different and be located outside the current centres.
7. Our leaders will become stewards who enable the enduring success of others. So we will also need different kinds of leadership – connecting vision and motivation with our collective purpose.
8. We will better reflect the communities we serve, welcoming people who bring different experiences, capabilities and knowledge into the public service and including them in our decision-making at all levels.

9. We will be open. Information and media will be constantly changing and contested. We will encourage people's active involvement in the process of government at all levels – moving beyond just consultation.

10. Becoming a public servant will be something people aspire to – we will be working together bound by a unified purpose and shared principles and values.