

2022 Snapshot: New Zealand's Public Service

The pandemic has shown how any of us can need support at any time. Is investment in public services keeping pace with demand and population shift? The PSA Te Pūkenga Here Tikanga Mahi looks at the numbers in 2022.

How does New Zealand's Public Service compare internationally?

- Proportionately, New Zealand's Public Service is the same size as public services in Australia and the UK.
- NZ spends a lower percentage of GDP on public services than Australia and the UK, and has less debt.



payments, and provide social and public health support.

- In the last year the Public Service has shrunk by 715 people.

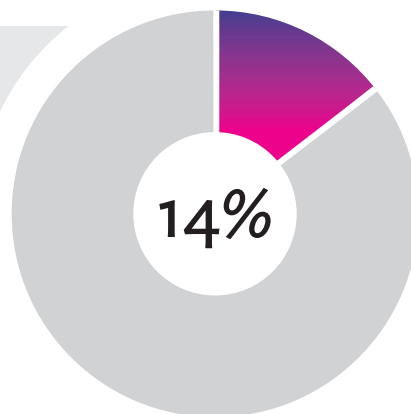
What work does our Public Service do?

- New Zealand's Public Service workers work in a wide range of jobs; most work in frontline roles. Others support the frontline or good decision making.
- Their work is constantly changing to meet New Zealand's needs: in the last year the biggest increases included education support services and education frontline advisors (73 FTEs, people working to improve schools' property portfolio and digital environment (65 FTEs) and support the national curriculum refresh (35 FTEs). and 180 FTEs to supporting work on climate change, waste, resource management, and freshwater(180 FTEs).

How has the scale of our Public Service changed?

- The proportion of working people who work in the Public Sector has remained stable for the last 20 years.

- The Public Service makes up the same proportion (14%) of the public sector as it did in 2017.

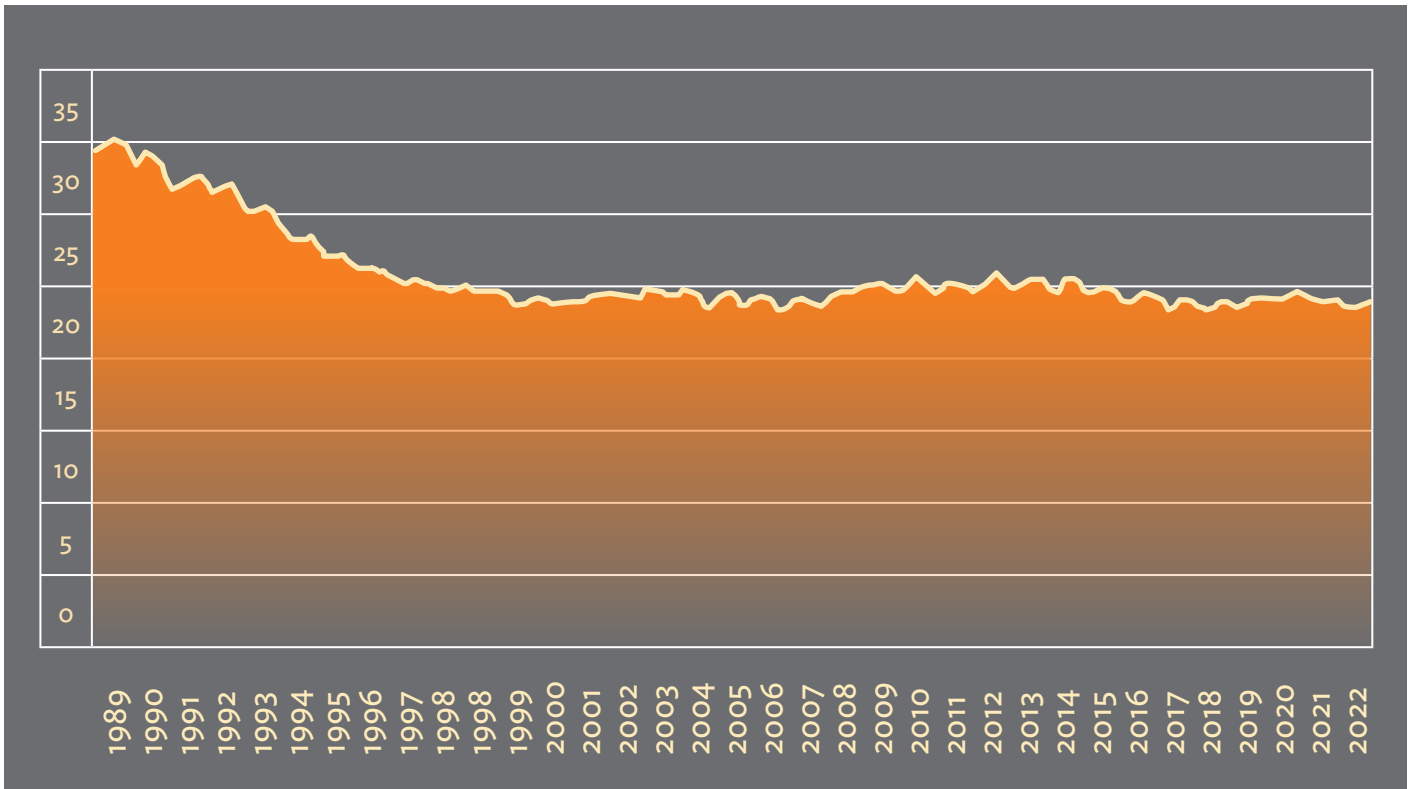


- The makeup of the Public Sector is constantly evolving to meet New Zealand's changing long-term and temporary needs. Since 2017, the Public Service has grown in proportion with population and workforce growth, with 13,130 more Public Service workers now than in 2017. This same period has seen a growth in demand for Public Services, especially to respond to COVID-19.
- Many roles established for the COVID-19 response were temporary: to run MIQs, contract tracing, deliver business support

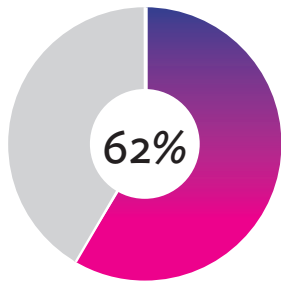
- Public Service pay has been falling behind private sector pay since 2017, leading to a decrease in staff in some frontline roles. For instance, Corrections and Oranga Tamariki have been unable to fill close to 1000 roles due to "tight labour market conditions".

Over the last year private sector wage growth was 3.9% above public sector wage growth, and public sector wage growth was 2.2% above Public Service wage growth.

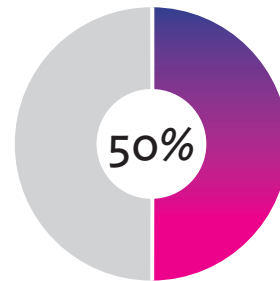
Public Sector as % of all employees is stable



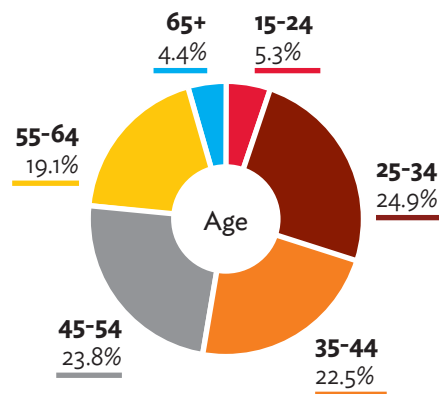
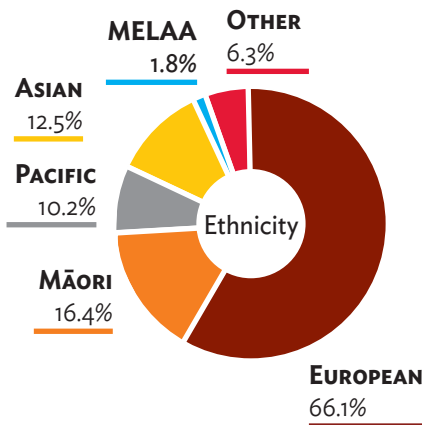
Who are the people working in the Public Service?



Most are women.



Half have caring responsibilities for their whānau.



The average age of someone working in the Public Service is 44. More younger people are now working in Public Service jobs than in 2017, correcting what had been an ageing workforce: the National Government's cap on Public Service workers (2008 – 2017) acted as a barrier to younger people entering these roles.

Here's a small sample of the important work our public service provides.



People inspecting restaurants and other food production to ensure food safety



People working with farmers to get rid of animal and plant diseases



People working to directly support other "frontline" services.



People visiting fishing boats to ensure they're catching a fair and safe quota of fish



Customs and biosecurity workers keeping our borders safe



DoC rangers maintaining huts and tracks and killing possums



Customer service people at Inland Revenue



People monitoring industry health and safety and environmental damage

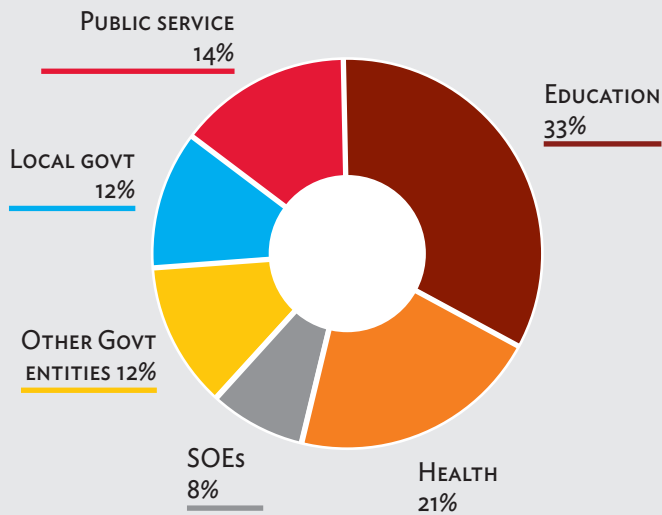


People processing passport and visa applications



Company tax inspectors

Public sector breakdown



- There are 62,043 people working in the Public Service. Most of the Public Service workforce works outside Wellington. Regions have 55.3% of the workforce, led by Auckland (20.7%), Canterbury (9.6%) and Waikato (6.5%).

What is the 'Public Sector'?

- This is broader than just the Public Service, and includes everyone else working for government: teachers, nurses, doctors and other health professionals, tertiary education staff; independent watchdogs like the Human Rights Commission, the organisations that support Parliament to run, Crown Owned Companies (like RNZ and the Crown Research Institutes), State Owned Enterprises (like TVNZ); and local councils.
- There are 448,157 people working in the public sector all around the country. The largest proportion is in Auckland (29.6%).

What is the 'Public Service'?

- The Public Service includes people working for government departments, like Conservation, Corrections, Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Ministry for Social Development.
- People employed in the Public Service work across more than 250 types of roles all around the country.

Where do they live?

When we look at all central government, including education and health, the largest proportion of the workforce is in Auckland. Around 113,700 (29.6%) of 384,400 central government employees are in Auckland.

The largest proportion of the Public Service workforce (44.7%) is located in the Wellington region, which comprises both regional and head office-based staff. This is a decrease from 44.9% in 2021. Other regions have 55.3% of the workforce, led by Auckland (20.7%), Canterbury (9.6%) and Waikato (6.5%).

Public service jobs by region

